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Theology in church and state

**THEOLOGY IN CHURCH
AND STATE**



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PREFACE

As I am to speak of a term so controversial as dogma, may I explain how I seek to use it. Historians like Harnack would limit it to a final system of belief, given more or less miraculously and imposed authoritatively by the Roman Church. Its popular use applies it to all theology, and identifies it with dogmatics. But the word, with its implicate of finality, seems so valuable for the idea of a Christian society, and so venerable in its great history, that I should be unwilling to surrender either it or its co-relative word Church to a sense so rigid as Rome's or so vague as that of the public. There must be some statement (however we use it) of that which is creative for a Church, some truth which is final and for a Church can never be other than true. For a Church there must be a stateable something frontal, fundamental and final, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The Roman Church holds that that statement is quantitative in

an elaborate system of belief and polity ; the Evangelical Church may reduce it qualitatively to a point of infinite dynamic in the fact, act, and truth that God was and is in Christ reconciling the World to Himself. But in either case it is a truth not simply held by the Church but held as constitutive for it. It holds the Church rather than is held by it. And that is the Church's dogma.

Rather than part with the word the attempt is here made to transfer it from the one use to the other, to indicate that within the wide range of a free theology there is an inner circle called Church doctrine, and within that again, the holiest of all, the dogma ; which is not simply of the Church's teaching but of its being, expressing not the Church's creature but its creator. There is a theology which is of the thinker's freedom, a speculative system ; there is one which is of the Church's property, an explication of its common faith ; and there is one whose property the Church is—which is of the Christian constitution, a statement of revealed grace. The last is brief but yet endless, and no term better fits it than dogma. Unless indeed that is held to be incurably vitiated by pre-emption for Rome's elaborate

and intolerant system substituted for the truly Catholic intolerance of the Gospel. In which case I would suggest a word like *κῆρυγμα*, the burthen of the Church's gospel. It is not reduction I suggest but rather compression. I venture on the attempt to rebottle the genie, to recall him from an expansion in which he covers (and hides) the heavens to a portable vehicle which the Church can carry and use everywhere as the positive source and bond of its unity in the Spirit. We hear too much of a unity of Spirit; too much, that is, by comparison with the reality which is the positive and objective source of the Spirit, and of any subjective spirituality of ours. So much for the first part of the book.

Some years ago I came across Maitland's edition of Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, to find that here was a point of view so new and thorough as to suggest a reconstruction of many aspects of our usual attitude on Church questions, as well as on certain others. Then, in 1913, I read Dr. Figgis' book, so largely based on Gierke, *Churches in the Modern State*. This work of a historian highly erudite and spiritual acted so strongly on me that, falling on the

soil prepared by Gierke, it sprang up in the second portion of this book. The principles there treated are of the first value for a theory of the Church which is to be just both to its distinctive life and dogma, its long history, and its relation to the society round it. Or if any one will say the society *within* it there is much virtue in that; for there is a commanding viewpoint from which it is more correct to speak of a Free State in a Free Church than of a Free Church in a Free State. The ideal Church is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven and its dimensions than the ideal State. It is therefore the greater body, which includes the less. The Church gives principles for the State, but the State does not give principles for the Church and only few methods; and Free Churchmen should of all men remember from their origin and history that only Christian forces can give practical effect to political ideals, and that modern politics have grown out of conflicts substantially religious.

The conviction of this book is twofold. First that the idea of the Church and its supernatural life by a new creation is decaying in several of the Churches that have been

most critical about its relation to the State ; whereas it is only a high and distinctive idea of the Church that gives us any right or principle regarding that relation. And, second, that a true Church is inseparable from a belief in certain doctrines for which men are ready to die—is, indeed, impossible without such belief ; and the decay in the Church idea (as distinct from that of a mere association, sympathetic or religious), is due chiefly to the decay of doctrinal interest and conviction. No theology, no Church.

I may add the farther opinion that no amount of political action taken by itself, however suffused by sympathy or righteousness, will bring to pass the Kingdom of God, or realize more than an unstable satrapy of it. When the Church, with its unearthly message and power, becomes a mere creature of the State, or when it becomes a spiritual luxury, salon, or hospital, outside the interests of the strong men or those honoured as efficient —then religion and ethic alike are paganized. They cease to be either spiritual or moral. And they head for a moral debacle which is the collapse of Humanity. Culture becomes, as it was in the Italian Republics, the engine

of wickedness and the varnish of cruelty. Macchiavelli is its prophet. And the war has shown us in Belgium the nature of its most ambitious champion to-day.

My thanks are due to my colleague, Rev. Prof. Andrews, B.A., D.D., for his kind revision of proof.

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INTRODUCTION

A MANIFOLD CHURCH THE ORGAN OF A RICH GOSPEL

NOTHING so eases theological or philosophical friction as the gift of insight, the spirit of the depths. The passion of the Gnostics and mystics for the Abyss is right ; “the farther we go into the sea the deeper it is” ; it is their method of entry that is wrong. To the divining power every new phase magnifies the unity of the old purpose, and enriches its fullness. True breadth is founded deep. The original and comprehensive minds are at the same time the profound minds. They plant all progress but the deeper in the past and in the soul. It is lack of depth that is the chief source of division. Breadth alone cannot stand its own tension. It is often remarked that Broad Church has practically passed into High ; and in the stress of life Liberalism, without ceasing to be liberal, passes into Catholicism either of the sacramental or the evangelical form. The

reason is what has just been said. Mere liberalism cannot stand its own tension. As it broadens it grows thin and rends. It grows shallow, and, in the less instructed forms, strident. It lacks "nature," through its very insistence on the natural. In gaining range it loses repose. It grows interesting—and powerless. It is so preoccupied with thought that it becomes inadequate for life. There is no depth to feed the breadth and to reconcile the extremes. The heart needs more than the mind can give, and the conscience needs a reconciliation and peace which mere harmony cannot bring. Even emotional thought lacks eternal foundation. And a revelation which is but illuminative pales and fades for want of the creative power involved in a redemption. To follow the gleam does not bring us to the Light of the World. The highest curiosity does not reach the everlasting strength. And the seekers after God do not arrive till they feel themselves found by the Searcher of hearts, and know only because they are known by the Eternal Choice.

"Do you understand *all* these things?" said Christ, as He expounded in parables the hoary laws of the new kingdom—old as powers,

new but as commandments. Or again, "The Spirit shall lead you unto *all* truth." Or once more Paul, "I have declared unto you the *whole* counsel of God" in a central and germinal Word. By faith's insight we see the world in its wealth and unity. We enter the fullness. And there has never been an age when the sense and passion of the world's fullness, darkling as it may be, was so intense as now. But we can see life whole only if we see it from its centre. We must find the Eternal at the heart of Time, and then return to trace it in the order of the day. We do not lose the particulars in the general but we do make them yield up their universal ground; we wish less to systematize them; and we are comparatively indifferent to their getting in each other's way, so long as we find them to be sacramental for the message of the whole.

I will illustrate from what is in some ways the most Christian of all the arts—Music. The spiritually minded, mentally gifted man, who develops to cosmic insight his intercourse with the God of Christ, is like an appreciative critic who listens to the performance of some great tissue of musical

art and poetic thought, crystallizing on a central idea. He is jealous that the authentic central word should be offered to the world, as it left the Master's soul, that his whole, and true meaning should be offered to the intelligence of a world to which music has a divine message; and especially that it be adjusted, in a growing tradition, to a later age than the Master's own. He is concerned that we should have the master's word as it was revealed originally, but plastically, in his inspired and creative soul. That message is destroyed by false emphasis, by careless neglect of expression, by exaggerated time, by slovenly syncopes, by flatness of tone. You may have a mechanical accuracy, a verbal infallibility, or a feat of memory and dexterity, and withal an obvious inability to realize the idea and emotion of the work. It is possible to maim and kill a thing of eternal beauty, while keeping the most pedantic faithfulness to the written notes. The good critic is more severe on a false accent than on a false note, as Beethoven himself was. "He was comparatively careless," says his biographer, "about the right notes being played, but angry at once at any failure in expression or

nuance, or in apprehension of the character of the piece; saying that the first might be an accident, but that the other showed want of knowledge, or feeling, or attention."

It is so with the symphony of the Eternal Word. That Word is a solemn music in a mighty unity and fullness. It speaks to the soul in a speech beyond words. It says more than the sounds say. But, also if it speak to the soul, it speaks to a subtle thing and a complex, a thing also of infinite mobility and variety—yet infinitely one. Therefore the whole Word of God is in the nature of a symphony on a theme. It is a sum of voices in a divine perspective and tissue round an idea, a significance, a message. It has a harmony deeper even than the wealth of counterpoint. It has the harmony which belongs to a cosmic thing and a living thing, not only fitly joined together, but compacted and organized by that which every bar or tone serves. There is such a thing as the "proportion of Faith"; there is a perspective, beyond mere flat sequence, in the revelation faith receives. The Divine Word is one, as the Divine Soul is. There are many voices and not one of them is outside the divine signification.

Who is equal to these things ? No one man. To grasp the true wealth of the One Word a whole Church is needful. And the Church must understand *all* these things, if not distributively and particularly, yet in a fullness and a hierarchy round a throne. It must listen with many ears, and imbibe by many senses at once. In justice to the central theme, it is not allowed to fix attention upon either one chord alone, or one movement or one air alone, nor to give false accent or expression to one number or theme. The one Word of the one manifold God is not only the sum total but the organic whole ; and to grasp it the manifold Church, the many Churches as members and complements of each other, must understand all these things at once as an individual cannot do. Love, Holy Love, which is that total Word, is a thing of infinite wealth and fullness as well as eternal power. And it radiates from a central personality and His everlasting act. Only a Church can fully respond here, not the single soul. The Church, not the individual, is the correlate of Christian truth. The great music needs orchestra and chorus round a conductor and round a theme.

To grasp all things in the way of scientific

knowledge is beyond us. Science is never complete nor final; though it strives to be so by filling out the gap with hypothesis and speculation. But we can apprehend all things implicit in God by Faith, by the religious insight which apprehends reality at its source as the whole saving counsel of God. For the purpose of salvation is the scheme of things. We reach by religion an infinity science cannot give us. And the crown of unity is then not simply *order* but fullness and *Blessedness*, which is our communion of the Holy, of the absolute whole in the absolute soul.

When the disciples were asked, “Have ye understood all these things?” and they answered rashly but not falsely, ardently if not quite truly, “Yea,” Christ regarded the truth in their reply, and ignored its bold inadequacy. They had some real sense of what we call the gist of them, the dogma. He replies with an appreciation, and says that that is the principle of the spiritual teacher, the scribe of the kingdom. “It is by such insight, penetrative though not exhaustive, comprehensive if not complete” (he would say), “that every true teacher is equipped for his work.” And

his power is the constant sacramental gift of going behind the obvious, the traditional, to the core ; of turning mere events into history, history into revelation, and revelation into salvation ; of reading between the lines, of piercing below the surface, of seeing the eternal in the temporal, the new bursting out of the gift of the old, the old living on in the discovery of the new. He perceives the eternal co-efficient in all time. The world of experience is a treasure-house of long accumulations, to which he has a master-key, and from which he is constantly drawing forth old jewels, cutting them anew, and setting them anew to sparkle in the new light.

We need not be surprised at the high respect paid by Jesus to the scribe, or what would now be called the scholar, the academic, the theologian. There were scribes and scribes, some but pedants, some the seers of a historic grace or a mystic ideal. There were scribes who put their learning at the service of Pharisaic orthodoxy, clever dull men, able ordinary men, smart stupid men, masters of the obvious, caterers to the hour and servants of its tables, who used their mind for the buttress of the popular creed old or new. “ Woe unto

you, Scribes and Pharisees.” There were such scribes. But there were scribes also, whose learning was the servant of a spiritual and prophetic idea, men who took time to learn before they took heart to teach, whose acquirements had not got the better of their thought, whose souls were fed by books and not buried beneath them, nor was their heart smothered in their great tradition, who were versed in the Fathers but had their conversation in the kingdom of the Son. Some of them felt Christ, and came to Him. “Behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and *scribes*, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify.” It is possible for even a scribe to be also a scholar, and being a scholar to be a great witness, reformer, and even martyr. And martyr he is not unlikely to be, if his be the competent mind, forward genius, and sacred insight of the kingdom amid an ignorant people who love to have it easy and will pay him much who makes it so. He knows the traditions but makes them serve the promises. He is full of memories which are flushed with greater hopes. He has gone to school not only with criticism but with the Kingdom of Heaven. In those days (as in our own) there

were scribes, learned and authorized expositors of the Word, who were all but prophets, and who from the lovers of pious sophists got the prophet's reward of neglect. But there were scribes also who were pedants without vision, capable dunces, shrewd dullards, masters of popular rococo, or retailers of popular blague, devoid of prophetic grasp even of the novelty, or else enslaved by precedent and scripturalism, where pious fancy took the place of faith's *flair* and historic tact.

The vital question for any Church is this question of its scribes, "Are your teachers pedants or prophets ? Are they immersed in their documents or versed in their Word ? Are they taught in their Torah, deep in their pandects, masters of apparatus and ridden by the ologies old or new, or are they instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven ? Do they worship the letter or the spirit ? Do they merely know the past, or do they discern its providence and interpret its cipher by a divine teleology ? Do they repeat their lesson old or new, or do they voice the living Word and creative Grace ?" What a calamity it was in the seventeenth century when the dogmatician swallowed up the apostle, when the dogma

of system killed the dogmatism of love ! At any one age of a Church, the majority of its teachers might be pedants either of antiquity or of novelty, without the gleam of the idea on the one hand, or with nothing but ideas on the other, with nothing between a stale word and the last cry. Yet the city of God remains, if there be in it but a powerful remnant, an influential minority of the very elect, who have true unction to inspire all their deep knowledge, real knowledge as matter for their insight, and the true art to find in their old Scripture the living key for the living age, the dogma of the Eternal. The ideal scribe, the instructed teacher who is properly equipped, is the man who knows the old, knows it scientifically, but knows it also for its perennial principle, saving purpose, and central dogma ; who has power to find the new in the old, the future in the past, destiny in precedent, unity in a manifold liberty, and the treasures which are eternal in the earthen vessel of Time. It is a heavy load for a Church when its scribes are but pundits of rite, science, or culture, and its preachers are less than prophets, when they are parched with logic, sodden with sentiment, or pinched with poverty of soul,

hanging by the Targums of the past, or the zealots of the present, instead of by Time's inner burthen, uttered Word, and vital creed. They may have religion and a certain fanciful simplicity but they have not intuition, they handle history but they have not its soul, and are neither prophets nor apostles. Their Bible is a code or a curiosity, laid out in topiary schemes, and cut into beds of elaborate fancy. The Garden of the Lord is bedded out. Or at the other extreme their Bible is but a historic document and no sacrament. They do not reach its historic core. There are those who read in from pious feeling more than they read out from historic faith. They are not instructed in the great Kingdom of Heaven, because they are neither versed in past history nor deep in the present age. They are real denizens neither of yesterday nor of to-day. But the masters of the past—not merely its students, but the masters of the past—are the lawful masters of the present and the creators of the future. The Bible loses the age if Christians lose the true, concrete, historic, positive, creative Bible, if they repeat it more than they understand it, if they do not prolong it. It is he who best fulfils (but not repeats) the finality of the past

that best secures the progress of the future.

And the great instance of that power is Christ Himself, whose incarnation of the Eternal Kingdom made Him speak with authority, not as the scribes. It gave Him the statesman's power, the thinker's, the prophet's, and not the mere politician's, the power to seize the present, and to mould the ages to come. And it is the Church, as His temple and organ, as the vehicle of His unsearchable riches, as the trustee of the dogma which He is—it is such a Church that has the command of the long future and the reversion of the social career. It is a Church high, deep, and free that is the only due hierophant of the manifold wealth of God's grace. It is the company of the saints that shall judge the civilizations of the world, fixed in faith's everlasting seat, and sure in the re-creative Word.

The great problem of the Christian hour is to combine variety and certainty, fullness and faith; to command liberty by dogma and enrich dogma by liberty; amid our wide operations to keep open and active communications with our evangelical base; to trace as the grand continuity of the past the principle which carries the present and is the

divine goal of the long future; to establish Church and State on the common rock of the Kingdom of God, and that upon the deep foundations of a racial and eternal redemption.

PART I

CHAPTER I

DOGMA

REFERENCE has been made sometimes to the possibility of a Church of one article, and to the facilities offered by certain free forms of Church organization for leading the way to a federate Church on such a base. And it is a great theme, with a prospect one ripe day of a great catholic confession of the faith in its fullness, to meet the largest thought of the world. But that is far off. It could only come when the Churches are organized in the sole interest of the one Gospel from which they and their confession spring. And the present question is one rather of terms of communion than of the plerophory of belief, of the Church's dogma rather than its confession, of the dogma that makes it rather than the confession it makes. It is a question that concerns

some statement with a relation to the full mind of the Church similar to that which the Apostles' Creed holds to the Athanasian or a baptismal formula to a Church's symbol. The larger the confession, of course, the more revisable it should be in due time.

I know that no theological term rouses more irritation at the present moment than dogma. To multitudes of people religion is the region of the most unchartered freedom, the most wayward subjectivity. The word liberty is dear to them, the word authority is hateful—by a fatal inversion of values. They resent like a personal insult the idea of any limitation in the spiritual sphere (where yet they are Christ's and not their own). And especially do they repel it coming from the past—where yet the source of Christianity is. In the present temper of the public mind on religion there is a possibility of a state of things in which the minister may preach anything religious if only he can fill his Church, and secure the public and the press. It is the hour of the tangential mind.

One of the most serious perversions in current Christianity is the idea that a Church is no more than a congenial brotherhood or sympathetic group instead of a house-

hold of faith ; that it can have a base humanely religious instead of religiously theological ; that it can be ideal without being positive, and rest on affinity rather than creation ; that it can be founded on what is called fellowship, and live on the sympathies, instead of being rooted and grounded on the creative and apostolic faith which stands in truth and blossoms in love. This means in practice a fatal transfer of the centre of gravity from an objective gospel to a subjective piety ; from a faith filled with God to a religion preoccupied with man ; from Evangelical Theism to a Christianized Humanism where no Church can live. No Church unity is possible on any subjective base, such as "the spirit of Christ," understood as a frame of mind instead of a new gift of indwelling life, and the incoming of a new power with a new creation. The only unity of a Church is in its objective, in the faith that lays hold of that, or rather is seized by it. Anything less than that gives us but a fraternity more or less friable. Church and Dogma are as inseparable as Church and Kingdom.

Is the aversion to dogma just ? Is dogma a spiritual curse or a divine boon ? Does it blast or create ? Is it a mere relic or is it a great jewel ?

§

The first remark to be made in this connexion is that the prime necessity of dogma, whatever is meant by it, is not for the individual but for the Church. The connexion of the individual with dogma as such is indirect. Dogma belongs to a Church's existence and a world-redemption rather than to individual salvation. And thus our sense of the value of dogma will be according to our sense of the value of a Church for Christianity and for Humanity. The Church sense and the sense for dogma rise or fall together.

It is, therefore, irrelevant for individuals or groups to say that they can get on perfectly well without anything like dogma. And far more irrelevant is it from people who stand outside a Church altogether. No doubt they can get on in this destitution ; but is that quite the point ? Many citizens, some senators, can get on without either politics or economics. A great many, who claim to be Christians, can get on comfortably enough without a Bible, so far as its personal use goes ; some without private prayer ; some

others without definite personal religion at all. It might be asked what is meant by getting on in this religious connexion. There is only one sense in which the phrase fits Christian faith. It is not possible just to rub on in a religion like Christianity. Do such people get on toward God, grow nearer a saving God? Does their communion with Him grow deeper, their repentance more searching, their life more humble, practicable, and beneficent? With all their intelligent getting do they get rich toward God? Does their intimacy with God grow at once more sure, more close, more ethical, more commanding, more subduing, more adoring? Does their interest in the world grow more unworldly and yet more loving? Is their life more and more hidden with Christ in God? Do they grow into Christ and into God? If not, does it matter what such people mean by dogma?

We need not argue with those to whom theology is but clotted superstition or crystallized mythology. But, turning to those who take it more worthily, is it something thrown out by man about God, or something conveyed from God to man? Is it a tentative scheme projected by man or a germinal, fer-

tile, yet final gift presented by God ? To which conception do they demur ? Is its essence for them the result of thought achieved or of revelation received, of intuition or inspiration, of hypothesis or authority, of man's discovery or God's donation ? Is it the summit of man's natural knowledge and spiritual science ; or is it God's basement of all supernatural certainty, spiritual security and mental command of things ? Is Christian dogma on the same footing as philosophic system ? Is it philosophy turned pious by being turned on God ? Is it the best reasoned account we can give of God ? Or is it the substantial account God gives of Himself, the "written reason" of His spiritual world ?

Perhaps, however, we should avoid these sharp alternatives. It may be reasoned system on both sides. If it is reasoned on a positive, historic basis given by God it is not wholly evolved in a natural logic from the natural man and his religious psychology. For Christianity at least, dogma is no more philosophic at bottom than it is individualist. If it is not the affair of an individual but of a Church on the one hand, it is not on the other the affair of a philosophy developed by a

Church but of a revelation creating it. It consists of a statement (or a series) about a Self-given God and not about a seeking religion, a statement which conveys the knowledge of His relation to us and expresses our relation to Him, a statement, therefore, which has its source in Him and not in us. What dogma is in its creative interior is not man's thought about God but God's treatment of man. It is preoccupied with the thing, the act, rather than the way of putting it. It states God's message and not man's construction of it, God's act and not man's surmise of what action would be like God. Its subject-matter is God's revelation, God's gift, of Himself ; and its object is to state His purpose as summarily or as adequately as possible. It is not an account of the Christian consciousness but of God's revelation which creates that consciousness ; a revelation which, indeed, emerges in man's consciousness always, and in its terms, but is not identical with it, and does not arise from it.

§

Dogma, simple or elaborate, something positive and final, is absolutely essential to a

Church, which cannot live in a viscous religiosity, a mere spirituality, any more than on a tentative belief, or an amateur and fancy faith. I am speaking, observe, of the idea of dogma and not of dogmas in particular. Certain dogmas of course have been mischievous, like certain views of the place of science in life. But something dogmatic is absolutely essential to a Church ; because it must always have some statement of the changeless act of God which created a Church on foundations that cannot be moved. You may say, if you like, that dogma or finality is otiose to Humanity. You can say that, but, since Humanity did not, like the Church, crystallize about a truth or person at its origin, you can only prove it by waiting to see. And you can see it only, too late perhaps, in the *débâcle* of a Humanity without dogma. You can say it about Humanity, because Humanity was not created by a dogma ; but you cannot say it about a Church which was —which was created in the cult of a dogmatic Christ. For a dogma, a final expansive fact capable of a statement, did create the Church, and is its permanent foundation. The Church was made by the message, “Jesus, whom ye crucified, is risen to be Saviour, King, and

Lord God." The grasp and statement of its fundamental positive dogma is at least as necessary to a Church as its worship, its philanthropy, or its missions. But indeed all religion is dogmatic in its nature.

But it is more difficult now than ever it was to make such a conviction credible to the Churches, victimized as they are by the *πολυπραγμοσύνη* of the hour tempered by mild mysticisms. In the most popular Churches Christianity as truth is not popular. Theology is not popular. What is popular is effect or impression. The Churches are pragmatist. They care most for what works, for what begins earning at once ; like parents who want wages from the children whatever happens to their education and to their future. Preachers themselves tend to read books of religion rather than to study theology, which reminds one of the familiar island, where they lived by taking in each other's washing. And we are all tempted by the democracy (or the dread of it), to be more concerned with the effect than with its source, with stirring interest than with founding conviction. But a Church that lives upon its sympathies (precious as they are), rather than its beliefs, upon sentiment rather than justification, has neither

power with God nor permanence with man. It is an evil time for two classes of people—for those whose theology is the heart of their religion, and for those who are more concerned about the future of the Great Church than engrossed in the bustle of particular communities.

§

But it will here be asked whether I am not rousing a gratuitous antagonism by using a word so objectionable as dogma has come to be, when I really mean theology. Or (to speak the language of theology), am I not using dogma for dogmatics in a somewhat aggressive way?

I do not intend to do so. If we could be clear about the use of terms, it would spare us much trouble, and take the thunder from some denunciation. And the distinction here is clear to my own mind. I will try to put my meaning quite explicitly and pointedly thus—distinguishing dogma, doctrine, and theology.

I. Dogma is final revelation in germinal statement. It is God's act put as truth. It is the expression of the original and supernatural *datum* of the purely given which creates

religion. It is truth about that in God which the Church stands upon. It is primary theology, or the Church's *footing*—as in John iii. 16.

II. Doctrine is truth about dogma, dogma expanded, and it stands on the Church. It is secondary theology, or the Church's *grasp*—as in the creeds.

III. Theology is doctrine in the making. It is tertiary and tentative theology or the Church's *reach*—as in 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 20.

I. To deal with the first.

Dogma is not religion, not faith; nor does it by itself create faith; it is the indispensable statement of that grace which does create faith, without which grace is dumb, not communicable, and therefore not grace. No statement as such, i.e. taken apart from the Gospel act it utters and the living power that utters it (the Spirit), can create faith. That can be done only by revelation, by truth as sacramental. It can be done by revelation only, if by revelation we understand that God reveals Himself, gives and conveys Himself, and not a truth about Himself. Nothing can create faith but God's actual coming in Son or Spirit, His actual contact and action in a

soul. Nothing else can be a final authority for faith. Personal faith, and then the Church (as faith corporate), were both created by the historic coming and action of God on man. But the action of God, as it came by the man Jesus Christ and comes in His Spirit, proceeds through men as agents. They become sacramental of God's grace. No man, I say, can create faith; only the grace can, which makes and uses men as elements in this sacramental way. But this grace, this Spirit of God, acts historically. What we have always to do with is the human consciousness, and what emerges there, and acts from there. Grace acts through human experience and human affairs; it acts by man on man, by generation on generation, by a Church on a world. Otherwise it were magic. It acts, in one word, as a conveyed, declared, preached thing. All the action and theology of the Church is a confession made manifold of the God of grace. Now this action of man on man, this conveyance, this preaching, is impossible except by some statement, some *κήρυγμα*, some dogma, intelligible (if not rational) but far other than tentative, of God's will and grace and act. No statement, no Gospel. It is Grace indeed, that

saves the soul, and creates the Church, but how? How does it spread to do so? Not by a mysterious infection in the air, as if it were a popular epidemic, but, as everything truly spiritual and intelligent must, by way of intelligible statement. The statement does not convert. It is the touch but not the thrill. It sets up contact for the virtue to pass. And it unites the healed. It ranges the cases, and it rallies the converts. It thus makes the Church, in a sense in which it does not create faith. We can never produce faith, or convert men by just stating God's case, and leaving it to the jury. It has to be winged, and forced into men by the Spirit working through men inspired, through men who know what and in whom they believe, dogmatic men. Faith is not faith unless it is also knowledge. Mystic elation, mystic reverie, is not faith. Faith has an intelligent content and expression, mystic though it must be with the mysticism of living person and answered act.

As an act meeting God's act faith is supernatural. Yet, miraculous as it is, it is not antirational. It is rational. A few words with the spiritual intelligence are worth

many mystic tongues to a Church. The apostle's ratio is five to ten thousand. "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others, than ten thousand words in mystic tongues. He that gabbleth in a tongue edifieth himself ; but he, that exhorteth, edifieth the Church." For a Church, intelligent statement is quite essential. That is to say, some statement is, if not the revelation, at least an integral part of it, "an essential means." And a Gospel can no more be detached from its truths than confused with them. An act, even an act of God, without an intelligent content and moral purpose would be but mystic magic. It would become, in worship, what it tended to become in the Corinthian Church till Paul took it in hand, religious gibberish, cabbala, and pious barbarism. Experience by all means. But experience which does not pass on to understand its object and express itself ceases to be experience ; it becomes mere sensation, mere temperament, mere religiosity. And for a faith like Christianity, which turns upon a life-regeneration, mere religiosity is no more valuable than mere assent, nor is mere fervour than mere orthodoxy.

Now the statement of the irreducible Gospel of our faith is its dogma. It is the Christian *Word* and positive content ; which it is the religious peril of the present hour to detach or dismiss from the Christian *Spirit*. It is the *Word*, traced in wire (so to say), which the current of the Holy Spirit makes to stand out, and glow, and speak volumes to us always. No Word, no Church. Without this intelligible Word the Church ceases to be social, and becomes a group of self-contained mystics ; or it is at the mercy of every individual reason with its atomic conception of things, its tentative theologies, its devout fancies, and its amateur intellectualisms.

One sometimes hears the insistence on dogma in the Church described as popery. And the vulgar comment on a preacher who declares from God a definite message whose truth is absolute, final and essential to the Church, is that he is in his way a pope. This has always seemed to me absurd as well as vulgar, because, such truth is just our base against popery. And it sometimes seems even grotesque, because it often comes from preachers who claim liberty to inflict on a silent and respectful congregation, without contradiction, the views of a mere

groping individual, who, as such, has no more right to demand reverent and silent attention to opinions of his than any intelligent person he addresses. To incorporate such a free lance address as part of the worship is popery in a bad kind. Such speech has a Church (if a Church) only in front of it, it has none behind it. If a man is uttering the message of God, or the condensed experience of it by the whole historic Church in a tremendous statement, which is sealed by a like experience of his own and his hearers, then he has some right to expect respectful attention, and even more. For it is God who speaks. But, if he offer only individual views, surmises, interpretations, or experiences, he has no claim beyond the civil right of free and open discussion, i.e. he speaks as a disputer of the world and not as an apostle of the Word. If we are to mention popery, that seems to me an egoistic popery which defies or destroys the collective voice and experience of the Church *under the conditions of preaching* created by the Church, and which asks silent and worshipful¹ attention by others to mere subjective impressions and rationalisms as the staple of God's

¹ For to hear the Gospel is an act of worship.

word. No reflections, however scientific or sympathetic, *about* the Christian spirit, or the Christian consciousness, or the Christian experience, make the truth of faith, or the word of the Gospel. The trail of the subjective and ineffective is over them all.

§

It is a mistake, therefore, to approach a question like that of dogma from any but the ecclesiastical point of view. It is a corporate and not an individual thing. It belongs to a supernatural body. I mean especially that it should not be treated from the view point of speculative theology and its rational freedom. Christian theology cannot be adequately developed except in a Church, and by men supremely concerned for a Church. Atomic views of the Church produce an amateur and arbitrary theology, and therefore a false and feeble theology. For the miracle of grace is more sharply opposed to the arbitrary than to the natural. The freedom of theology in a Church must always be conditioned neither by the logic of a rational principle, nor the intuitions of a sympathetic heart, but by the central nature of the objective revelation of grace which creates the Church, and is stated posi-

tively, however briefly, as its dogma. Much of the opposition to the dogmatic idea arises from those whose interests are but theological (whether positive or negative, rational or sentimental), who have no dogma or standard, and whose place is in a university of unchartered research rather than in a Church of the final Word. The real ground of interest in dogma, whether the word or the thing, is its creative value for a Church. The practical concern is for the Church, its future, and its permanence. If we are not interested in the Church idea at all, if we are but interested in the University idea ; or if we are interested in certain associations, once Churches, that now cultivate but religious sentiment, humane philanthropy, or the aesthetic interests of religion, then the question of dogma falls to the ground—to be followed sooner or later by these associations themselves. But, if we are not amateurs of religion or pundits of theology (positive or negative), if we are real believers and members in a Church as a supernatural society of the Holy Ghost, we cannot but feel that the most challenging question of the vexed hour is, what is a Church ? And it is in answering that question that the question must arise

about the truth to which a Church owes its being, and which a Church is there to proclaim, about the power which it confesses, which creates it and constitutes it, about the principle on which its whole existence and its mission turn. The prime interest of the Church is not theological in the ordinary sense (where theology is an inferential discipline with "Greek demonstration"); it is dogmatic (where the theology is simple, fundamental, revealed, and creative, with "the demonstration of the spirit and of power"). It does not concern the free development of a system, nor the criticism of previous systems. It concerns the invasion, the revelation, on which all Christian theology rests—God's pure gift of Himself, and His account of Himself and His purpose in the heart of all man's version of that account, distinct from it but inseparable. If God has given this account of Himself, it is dogma for a Church. The Church rests upon no opinion but upon a revelation, upon the Holy Ghost. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us"—*εδοξε*. The founders of the Church were not working with a theology of views or opinions but with a dogma, not with a conjecture but a gift. And, if it be said that a

dogma is but that which $\delta\omegaκ\epsilon\iota$, the answer - must be made, first, that it is a commonplace of scholarship that both in the New Testament and in the language round it (especially among the Stoics) $\delta\omegaγμ\alpha$ is not a mere seeming or opinion, but a fixed tenet which becomes a binding and corporate decree, a bond of union for that school, and its term of communion. And second it may be asked if the Holy Ghost has opinions.

If a Church differ from every other society or institution in resting on a final revelation and not on a tentative construction, like science, nor on an instinctive sympathy, like a fraternity, nor on a utilitarian purpose, like a State, then the statement of that base is its dogma. If a Church have no final fact, it can have no dogma ; but then also it is no Church. It has nothing to distinguish it from any other society for religious culture, research, or utility. But the Church is not simply a religious society for the promotion of philanthropy, righteousness, or religious knowledge. When we ask, therefore, “ What is the Church ? ” and “ Where is its unity ? ” we ask, What is its dogma ? How do you describe its “ revelation ” ? What made it ? Upon what does it rally ?

With what fact does it go to the world ? What is its *κίρωγμα* ? Church unity is finally a theological question, and it is the modern theologian or scholar, with his slow eirenic tendency, that is doing most for it. The unity of the Church is a question of its dogma. The Church has but one object in the world—to make believers in that gospel. But also dogma is a Church question. It has real value only for those supremely concerned for a Church and its unity. It concerns a Church as distinct from other religious societies on the one hand, and, on the other, from individual souls. Truly, the Gospel as a power, as a grace met by living faith, may flourish in many single souls who have never tried to formulate the revelation in the simplest way. But they were made by a corporate Church, it should not be forgotten. They heard an intelligible message. And, were the Church but a congeries of such spiritual atoms, a crowd with an attractive Jesus in the midst, a group round a mere magnetic pole, a mere concourse of souls with nothing more than an individual relation of personal ardour toward the same central individual ; if each formed a lone point somewhere in a private route and

radius from Him ; were Christ but our centre instead of our sphere ; were we but round Him and not in Him ; if the Church were but such a star-map, or rather star-dust ; and, if union with Christ did not mean, in the same act, citizenship of a kingdom constituted by the act of its King, and entry on a real society and body of His spirit with an organization *inter se* in Him—then also dogma, or a common statement of the creative grace wherein they stood, would not be called for ; and Christian truth would be no more than what every Christian man troweth in his amateur and tentative way. And the world would rejoice ; for there would be nothing to challenge or arrest it.

§

Where does the Church rally ? is then a larger question than that of individual faith. And it means little to the purpose now to say that we concentrate on Christ. A Christocentric Christianity was the ideal of the late nineteenth century, but it is already out of date. It is too vague for the purposes of a Church in such a world, to say nothing of the records of its origin. Men are very willing to gather about Christ as their brother and cap-

tain but not as their salvation, not as absolute King. But we must not empty the Gospel in order quickly to fill the Church. *Non multos quærimus sed multum.* The question is, on what Christ are we to concentrate? We rally not aesthetically on Christ's character but morally on what Christ means and does, not on a figure prime in our moral aesthetic, but on a person final for the conscience, and creative for divine communion. We rally not on the excellency, the perfection of Christ, but on His redemption, not on His figure but on His work, not on His felt harmony and beauty but on His trusted reconciliation by grace. At the 1910 World Congress of Liberal Christianity in Berlin, they concentrated very reverently on Christ, but in such a way that certain Jewish representatives asked why they did not all return to an enlightened and deritualized Judaism. The question is just and unanswerable. The badge of this theological Liberalism is what is called lay-religion, the excision of the distinctive thing in Christianity—the act final for time and eternity—the Pauline, that is, the Apostolic, the mediatorial, Gospel; or it is the treatment of it as an outgrown

stage. Yet it is upon that very apostolism that the historic Church has really lived. Paul's Gospel was indeed "the Lord the Spirit"; but only because within that it was the Lord our righteousness. The Cross of the manifestation of God and His re-established righteousness is the fountain of the Spirit. It is to that element that the Church rallies in all its great crises and most vital forms. Its Augustines, its Luthers, its Wesleys are all Paulinists. If they were wrong, if their Paul was wrong about Jesus, then the Church is not Christ's Church but the Church of Paul. But, if they were right, the one dogma of the Church is the compressed statement of that Gospel act of Christ on which it rests, the act which reveals in power the righteousness of God unto salvation, as the chief apostle defines it. The character of Christ rests on His person; and His person has universal and eternal value for us only as it takes effect, condensed but entire, in His act of death and rising as God's final and endless act of holy redeeming love. That is the spearhead, all that went before is shaft. All Christ's words and works before that were propaedeutic for that, and often, as propaedeutic, very meagre, too meagre to

found a Church. About that act He was Himself very silent, for it was done chiefly to God. His closing prayers were not for man's redemption but for God's glory in His own obedience. He was not anthropocentric. Moreover He did not theologise. His left hand did not know what His right hand did. But the Church, with an instinct which was really His own inspiration, seized on that Act as its true centre of gravity and its Evangelists wrote all their words to that tune. They have little or nothing to say of Christ's teaching. The Church found the ground of its existence in the Reconciliation, with its halloowing of God in order to sanctify man. The statement of that vital, eternal matter is the mystic dogma of a standing or falling Church, because it is what created it. The form such a statement may take is not fixed and final like the act it sets forth, if only it give brief, simple and true effect to the saving Gospel concerned. And the more brief it is the more it approaches an illimitable finality.

We may prefer to put such a statement in Scriptural form. A dogma cannot be made by a dictator or a committee. Either it must grow from the history of a Church

(like the Athanasian), or it must be a gift of God's inspiration to the Church's experience in some classic soul (like an Apostle's). It cannot be a manufactured article, it must be a fruit, or an inspiration. And, if we have to choose, we are perhaps safest with it as an apostolic inspiration. In that case we might take for the dogma of the Church, "God so loved the World that He gave His only-begotten Son to be a propitiation for us that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Or perhaps still better, because still more intimate and yet cosmic, would be Paul's words at the end of 2 Corinthians v.: "God hath given us the ministry of reconciliation, which is that God was in Christ, reconciling the world, not imputing their trespasses unto them. For [to meet the conscience that resents its easy forgiveness] He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Or we might take Romans i. 16, 7. Or, if we went to the Synoptics, we should find their centre of gravity condensed in the passages in which Jesus says that all truth is committed to Him by the Father on the ground that no one knoweth the

Son but the Father, nor any the Father but the Son, and He to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him, in a ministry in which He gives his life a ransom for many.

But, whether you take these statements or another, some dynamic statement there must be, on the scale of grace, on the one hand, and on the scale of the race on the other, and of the Church that confronts the race. Some statement by the Church of the grace and gospel in which it stands is necessary, were it only to inform the world why the Church claims room to live, work, and serve, and in its own way, to command.

If a more theological statement is preferred, so far as the Church is at its heart evangelical no better single doctrine can be found as its dogma than that which expresses the power of justification by faith. This doctrine is the truth of that moral element which is latent but inseparable in Christian faith, and which distinguishes it from mere religion at mystic depths. In mystic religion revelation and religion are constantly flowing over into each other; but for Christian faith positive revelation is the fundamental, prior and creative thing. Faith is,

indeed, an act of will and not of thought ; its assent is surrender and not mere homologation. But it is not mere instinctive will or Godward volition. It is will charged with a positive and pregnant act to which it consents and surrenders, will answering the will and embracing the purpose of God. The knowledge in such faith is as real as the moral life it produces. The statement is not indeed the saving act, but it is a part, and an integral part, of it.

§

But why prefer a statement of an apostle to one of Christ as I seemed to do in the selections above ? The difficulty is that we have nothing from Christ at first hand. The whole of the New Testament is statement about Christ, or report of Christ. It is not statement by Christ in the sense in which it is statement by Paul. It is confession by disciples rather than the Master's autograph prescription or injunction. And, if we must select among the witnesses to Christ and His work in the New Testament, nothing is so central as the passage I quoted from

Corinthians or Romans. Nothing, at least, is so central for the Epistles (where the Church's centre of gravity lies). The corresponding passage in the Gospels would be Matt. xi. 25–27, as I have said. But, as a report of Christ at certain removes, that comes less directly from Christ than the Pauline passage comes from the completion, triumph and inspiration of His work. It comes to Paul directly from the Lord the Spirit. The Epistles are more inspired than the Gospels. We are in more direct contact with Christ. We are at one remove only. We hear the man who had Christ's own interpretation of His work. And we are less at the mercy of oral tradition, or the weakness of the reporters, or their editors. The Gospels, with their unspeakable value, are yet but propaedeutic to the Epistles; and most of the higher pains and troubles of the Church to-day arise from the displacement of its centre of gravity to the Gospels. The hegemony of the Gospels means the decay of the Church—whatever hopes we might retain of a Churchless Christianity. In the Gospels Jesus is in contact but with timid disciples and not with triumphant

apostles and martyrs and confessors. He is not yet in contact with the Church ; which was only founded in the Pentecostal act. (What Christ founded was the New Covenant, the New Creation, the New Humanity.) He is the centre of a group of brethren who did not yet owe their souls to Him in the final way which, for instance, differentiated the Peter of Acts and of the Epistles from Peter the denier. We may even go so far as to say that the relation in which Jesus stood to His disciples during His life was not saving faith ; which means and moves to communion with Him, and not mere intercourse. It was in principle Old Testament, as Christ was prophet ; and it so remained till Pentecost, after which the disciples never looked back ; and they forthwith turned Christianity from a conventicular group to a bold, public, and universal Church, whose King was not its prophet but its high priest.

§

For a number of years now, convinced that the unity of the Church is a matter of its belief and not of its sentiment or even work, of its theology rather than its philan-

thropy, of its faith more even than its good feeling, I have tried to promote the idea of a Church of one germinal article as the only condition of Church union and survival, and especially as the protection of its theological development and freedom. For a Church of faith must have a limit in the interest of its freedom—though a university of mere research can have none. And I was greatly relieved and cheered to find Dr. Denney taking the same position in his great book on Jesus and the Gospels. But by one article on such a subject is not necessarily meant one statement, one proposition. That might be bare and poor enough. I mean one living, and therefore composite article, whose ruling feature should be not its brevity (brief though it should be) but its germinal fullness—such an article as the passage from **2 Corinthians v.** would form. It is not the statement of a principle from which the whole system of Christian knowledge is educed by a logical necessity. It is not the major premiss of a syllogism. And it is not there as the limit of compass but as the centre of power, and its norm; not to purge the Church of some but to enhance the faith of all, not for bondage

but benediction. It is the condensed account of God's re-creative act of grace for the race in Christ, given in a function of that act by Christ Himself in the apostolic intelligence. It is the Gospel's own account of itself. The Church's Gospel here stated is at once its permanent ground, its normal principle, and its final goal. The one article, or dogma, of a standing or falling Church is the statement, but not the exposition, of God's act of justifying grace in Christ and Him crucified.

§

It will hardly be urged, upon reflection, that the rallying of the Church as a corporate body on such a truth would restore the Intellectualism which in Scholasticism broke Catholicism, and in Orthodoxy came near to wrecking the Reformation. To say nothing of the brevity, centrality and dynamic tenseness of the statement suggested, an intelligent Gospel is not an intellectualist. Intellectualism only comes when revelation is conceived primarily as truth, or when the truth passes from being categorical and simple to being scientific and elaborate, when it is divorced from the soul's life, and domineers

it. That is impossible when we treat the statement of the revelation, its expression, but as an integral element of it, an essential means, but not its very nature and power. To treat the statement as itself the revelation is just what a non-psychological view of inspiration was apt to do. And then we had had the intellectualism of orthodoxy.

§

There is this advantage in falling back for our dogma upon an apostolic formula like Paul's (which is also substantially the faith of the whole apostolate). The nature of the revelation is better expressed in the Bible, where the answering religion is most direct and classic, than in any statement of later dogmatic. An apostle is worth more for the Church's one dogma than all the theologians and councils of the Church. And we have this advantage in particular. We give to dogma a psychological and experimental base. We give it the psychological base demanded by an age like our own, in which theology is being more and more closely coupled up with the soul's experience.

The public animus against dogma is not

wonderful, however fearful—however impatient and uninformed. Theology altogether has become for the public dry and abstract both because it has travelled too far from religious experience (especially from the conscience), and also because in spite of that it has been made to determine individual salvation. It has thus been made an austere test instead of a glorious confession. It has become the victim of an intellectualism (orthodox or heretical) more abstract than that of science itself ; and yet in that form it has been forced upon a public which has little or nothing but experience to go upon. But we should not overlook the equally real passion and need of dogma in another section of the public. And we should note also that theology is now well advanced in a change which does not abolish it (like the popular rebellion), but moves it from a speculative to a psychological foundation. A doctrine like the Trinity, for instance, is no longer founded upon a metaphysic of three transcendental movements of thought which receives a popular form in Athanasianism ; but it is felt that, if it is to be preserved at all, it must be as a foundation, condition, or corollary, of the

peculiar quality of the Christian experience, the Christian certainty of holy love, grace, and salvation direct from God. So also the only satisfactory approach to the doctrine of Christ's person is through an experimental doctrine of His work—the true theology arriving through the saving faith. The teaching of Jesus in like manner is seen to be minted in His own experience, and is to be read as reflected autobiography. He Himself, for instance, was constantly selling all He had for the pearl of great price.

From this point of view, therefore, the Pauline form which I have quoted has much to recommend it. It did arise out of an experience so exalted, direct, and classic that we are driven to postulate for it some real and authoritative inspiration. And I speak of inspiration in the modern form, by which inspiration must be construed as the inspiration of a whole man's soul and not of a faculty of it, the inspiration not of thought as thought, nor of a book. The writer was inspired before his Epistles were. Paul was more inspired than Romans. By his own account Paul's life had given place to the life of Christ proceeding in him. Not as if his individuality had been replaced by a

vague elation of featureless spirituality, but by a life so marked and specific as that of Christ condensed and pointed into His Cross. Paul was no mere penman, but the minister or organ of such a supernatural Christ. And this with a completeness and purity which made him, on the central matter of the creative Gospel,¹ utter the mind or word of Christ not in a trance but by a real moral experience, which was in as much psychological *rapport* with the great religious experience of the race as with its Saviour. If we are to have a dogma at all which meets the conditions of modern faith, it seems more fitting to seek its expression in an experient of genius like Paul than in the decrees of councils intellectualized by the philosophic fashion of a later age, and determined by a majority which expressed the inferior psychology of a crowd rather than that of a saint or apostle. We are learning at last that the prime object of the Christian revelation is not to exhibit to us the exuberant wealth of God's thought, but to carry home to us the riches of His grace and the reality

¹ Such matter as the Sacraments or eschatology requires separate treatment.

of His gift in the Saviour's act and deed which grows in the Church from age to age.

§

There was a crude way of conceiving the dogmatic inspiration of an apostle like Paul to which I have already alluded, and which proceeded in this wise. We had the fact of Christ's life, death, and resurrection in the Gospels. But this fact was not the saving act. It was only preliminary to salvation, which came by a theology of it, by pure doctrine, by a scheme of it clothed with divine authority. Such an interpretation was provided by a second act of God—and an act, this time, of the Spirit instead of the Son. The Spirit provided the Apostle, by dictation or otherwise over his head, with the authoritative theology of Christ's work ; and this dogma we had no choice but to receive and extend *ab extra*. Christ was of no saving value to us till we did. That is to say, the real and effective thing for us was the intellectualist element in revelation, the addition that came by way of statement from the Holy Ghost, like a hard light or a sharp mould from the outside east on Christ and His deed.

Now, orthodoxy of this kind was intellectualist (I say was, for it is not easy to find now), because the interpretation is detached from the organic and psychological action of the revolutionary fact itself on the soul. It is right in so far as this, that the valuable thing is not the empirical or even the aesthetic fact of Christ, not Christ as merely historic or impressive, but His divine action and meaning, His revolutionary function and meaning, His value for God, His value as doing justice to God, as God's self-justification. His value as God (since God alone can do justice to God). "Jesus Christ is worth all that God is worth," says Goodwin. The valuable thing is the interpretation of the historic fact or person, of Jesus as the divine act of grace. As the Old Testament is not the history of Israel but of redemption in Israel, so the new is not simply the history of a personality but of the Son of God, of a personality not merely sacramental but mediatorial. And, as a step farther, the apostolic interpretation of Christ's act as God's act *is* an integral part of the whole divine revelation. The expression is organic to the reality. So far good. But

the old orthodox view is wrong in thinking of the interpretation as a second divine act, and in thinking of it as formal. Paul was specially and divinely illuminated as the interpreter of Christ's act; *but it was by the effect of that act itself upon him, by that act (condensing the whole personality of Christ) living itself into His personal experience, and expressing itself ineffably there.* When Paul realized that Christ's death was not the martyrdom of a prophet but the consummation of the World-Redeemer's Person and vocation, he was not the vehicle of a brilliant gloss upon Christ, nor the author of a suggestive memorandum; he was the organ of that Christ living in him, dying in him, and rising in him with a life more intimate than his own. With such an experience (Gal. ii. 20) it was impossible but that his interpretation of the central thing at great moments should be Christ's own version of Himself and His crucial significance in the history both of God and man. Paul did not know it, but Christ knew it in him. Paul was not present at the Cross but the Spirit was that lived in him and He revealed its inwardness in him. In 2 Corinthians v. 19 Paul is not analysing

or speculating : he is preaching. And it is not Paul that speaks but Christ ("as though God did beseech you by us—we pray you in Christ's stead")—unless Paul was under an illusion in speaking of his experience of Christ, and talking extravagance here in an ecstasy of peroration. The Spirit was the Lord the Spirit. It was Christ submerging Paul but not stupefying him, Christ bearing witness of Himself with all His work now behind Him. It was Christ transcending Paul, but in no trance, and teaching about His death as He could teach only when it had been died—just as He could only expound his parables after they had been spoken. There is nothing intellectualist in this, unless every expository or illuminative statement is such. Two things destroy intellectualism here, one psychological, one moral. First, the creation of the statement by the experience it interprets. And, second, the supreme quality of that experience as an act and not a mood nor a mere gleam, person meeting person in reciprocal life action. We have the modern principle of the primacy of the will in the spiritual whole. Paul's dogma is not intellectualist, first, because it is the transcript of a real and central experience, which, by

Christ in it, has creative power to reproduce itself in others ; and, second, because that experience was experience of an act by an act. It was Paul's act of faith experiencing Christ's act of grace. It was the act of Christ which prolonged itself, or "functioned," within Paul's act of faith, and became its own expositor there. Symbol and significate coalesce in a shining point. In a time like the present, when a sounder voluntarism is displacing the old intellectualism, it is easy to discredit any positive statement about religion by calling it intellectualist. But it should be well understood what intellectualism is. It is not positivity ; it is the identification of religion, of living faith, with pure doctrine. It is the idea of dogma as being identical with religion, instead of merely inseparable from it in a church. It is the treatment of faith as the assent to a form of truth which neither condenses a personal experience in its first vehicle, nor requires a personal experience for our appropriation of it. It is the demand for assent to scientific statements either divinely guaranteed (by their miraculous communication) or proved by the usual logical methods, or imposed by a categorical authority with-

out psychological mediation. Intellectualism makes faith the mere acceptance of rational knowledge, miraculously conveyed and guaranteed, and, first and last, out of relation to the thing most personal in the soul. It is the identification of the revelation with its presentation; and it is the polar extreme to the mysticism which separates these. In the New Testament the inspiration, the *truth* of the reality is integral to the revelation which is the reality, but it is secondary. It is the temperature and the form created by the revelation. It is reality minted for currency. It is secondary to the manifestation itself, to the fact and value of the revelation from God to man, which is the *act and power* of God unto salvation; though it is primary in social function, primary to its transmission from man to man, and therefore primary to the empirical existence of a Church. When we say dogma is essential to a Church, we do not mean that as dogma it creates a Church, but that a Church created by the grace which dogma expresses cannot pass through history without it. Dogma becomes intellectualist only in cases like Haeckel or other rationalists, where the principle is that certainty is only possible

by the way of theoretic knowledge, by a science more or less elaborate, by a knowledge independent of personal experience, and severed from the corporate consciousness of a society. But human conviction and contact with reality is not limited by scientific and noetic knowledge. There is a saving knowledge in faith, or the soul's direct relation to God, which is at least equally real and intelligible. The dogma of it is certainly more than opinion. It underlies and carries the progressive opinion of the Church. And it is not intellectualist when it is the central expression of the living experience of an eternal act in a universal apostle or a universal Church. The dangerous dogmatism is illimitable and omnipotent science, not positive, intelligent faith.

CHAPTER II

DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGY

II. BUT now, to pass from dogma to doctrine, from a condensed source of saving knowledge to its plerophory, from evangelical statement to theological. The Gospel of God's grace to the whole world forever is a far mightier matter than can be made explicit in any statement however elaborate. Its explication is the whole action of the Church. A statement, especially as preached by a living apostle, may convey sacramentally its power for the soul or the race; but besides its power there is also its manifold wealth in a church of souls and a world of thought. If it thunder through a gorge it expatiates in the plain. The same Rhine which drives all the turbines of Schaffhausen by the compressed weight of its fall, also spreads into innumerable streams over the vast plain below Basel. There is the leisured wealth of Grace in relation to the life of a Church or to the thought of the world, as well

as its power in relation to the first urgent needs of spiritual life. It must be made intelligible to the soul of the race also, and not only to the world's moral need but also to its mental growth. It presses, like a head of steam, to scientific expansion in driving the world's machinery. Its doctrine is a part of its expansion as surely as its missions are. It must be stated, not only in terms of immediate faith but mediately in terms of mind, and of the best mind of the race. The faith of the evangelized Church must suffuse its mind ; and that means also adjustment to the mind of the thinking world—so far, at least, as to speak its language. It has a cosmic compass. It carries with it a scheme and destiny of things as well as their moving power. It construes all life and experience, all the universe, by a final and pervasive purpose, a teleology of the universe. The Church's experience of its revelation must not only be stated but it must be organized by its own principle in the manifold wisdom of God and riches of Christ. The Church dogmatic passes on to the Church merely didactic. Besides the Church's plain statement of its Gospel, besides its dogma, there must be its sci-

tific exposition of it from its own base, its doctrine. The Church has in its brief dogma more than dogma. Its Kerygma is not a bald cry but a teeming word. It is not a cinder but a coal. It has infinite implicates, and its statement develops according to circumstances, into its doctrine. The changeless trunk, stiff with vitality, branches into many flexible limbs. These may also be pruned or lopped for the tree's life according to circumstances or season, and the tree's fashion may be altered. The ancient and prolific vine may be trimmed, trained, and pleached from time to time. From time to time an analytic age passes forward to a synthetic, and the Church has to give its corporate construction, more or less explicit, of the world, of man, and of society. This it is both entitled and required to do, not only for its own sake but for the world's. As the world's guide it should have the guide's self-orienting faculty in new regions. It should lay its own course on the sea; it should know where it is in the forest; and it should let other people know. It should envisage the country where it dwells.

Such confessions form the Church's doctrine.

They grow out of the nisus to positive knowledge throbbing in a revelation so full of power, insight and content as Christ's. They clarify and deepen the Church in their own way as surely as its worship does. Its theology is as essential in its place as its liturgy, or its benevolence. It is a part of its energy as truly as its reforms are. Doctrine (and its reform at the proper time) is *for the Church* an obligation not less but more intimate than social reform ; for surely the first society which faith has to tend, establish and renew is its own society of the Church. It has to protect itself from the fantastic, the erroneous, the superstitious, and the anachronistic. It has to take stock of its vital truth, construe its spiritual world, and restate its purview from time to time, at seasons selected by itself as due and profitable, if it is not to pass out of touch with the world, and lose effect in reforming it. And these seasons will be when its own spiritual life is full, strong, and sure, and not when it is impoverished either by its own faithlessness, its own bewilderment, or the criticism of the world. Such have been the great confessional ages of the Church, from Chalcedon to Augsburg. The great confessions are

in their nature great odes, and they express a great time, a great grasp of it, and a great triumph. The canticle of the Athanasian Creed, for instance, was the battle-song of that tremendous conflict by the Pyrenees which secured Europe from Moslem conquest, and saved the whole civilization of the future. That should be remembered when we groan under its formulae. The Creed did that. It could not do it now. But have we a belief which could do anything like it and save society from any peril equally great to-day ? And, if there are several such confessions alongside of each other, that need only signify, not hopeless division, but the varied life and complementary wealth of the Church's moral mind. In dogma the Churches must be one, but in type of doctrine they may be manifold. The gold has one value, but it is minted to many coinages for many lands.

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Let us put the relation of dogma and doctrine in this way. The order of development in the spiritual interior of the Church is, first, faith as personal trust ; then the knowledge

latent in faith, of its fact, of the content which lifts it above mere subjective religion ; then the brief common confession of such creative and intelligent faith ; and then its expansion in the noble heat of conflict into theology and doctrine. There is for faith a theology which is latent in the Gospel and a theology which is more and more explicit.

There is a theology without which it cannot be stated or confessed, but remains mere mystic religiosity for individuals ; and there is a theology into which it must expand as part of its growth and wealth in a Church. The former we may call *primary theology*, and the latter *secondary*. It is the former that concerns the very foundation and meaning of the Church, involves the assent of its laity no less than of its ministry, and gives it its right to be. The other, like its polity, concerns less the being than the well-being of the Church ; and commits chiefly its leaders and teachers. The former is verifiable by personal experience, and is the Church's *dogma*, "I believe that God was in Christ forgiving and reconciling the world through the Cross." The latter is experience which has passed into the Church's reflection ; it is its *doctrine*, the

manifold plerophory into which that mighty Gospel or teeming dogma opens for the spiritual thought of the Church's corporate life in an intelligent world. "I believe in Christ as the second Adam, the Son from Heaven, the pre-existent and self-emptied Son, the hypostatized Logos, the final rationality of a moral creation, or the moral spring of all evolutionary growth." The one order of theology may be described as the Church's *foot*, the other as its *hand*. The one exists for the Church's foundation and standing, touches the rock, and has to do with grace, atonement, faith and love in the Holy Ghost. It is God's direct gift in Christ. It is what saves the Church from being a mere group of subjective religionists with a faith formless, unintelligible, incomunicable and atomic. The other has to do with the Church's *grasp* —not its firm footing but its wide grasp—and especially its grasp of the mentality of each age, of the age's spiritual situation on the large scale, its great problem and its greater solution. It handles the matters that occupy apologetic or exploration, themes like the Church's relation, say, to the question of immanence and transcendence, or to modern

society, to the general conscience, or to the last things. A metaphysical formula is certainly not the object of faith; metaphysic is not faith's footing; but it is within the grasp of faith. It may be used as a calculus, a mode of expressing faith, when faith lifts its great head in a metaphysical age. If we thus distinguish between a primary and a secondary theology, between revelation with its resources made morally intelligible and revelation with its content made scientific, then the primary theology is for the Church dogma or foundation, and the secondary is the Church's doctrine or superstructure. We have the term of communion swelling to the tide of confession. We have the Church's rock of truth and its palace of truth. The difference corresponds to that between the baptismal confession and the much fuller statement of Christian truth put by the bishop afterwards into the hands of the baptized.

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But now to pass to theology more strictly taken, as distinct from either dogma or doctrine. Before the Church can make the corporate confession of the doctrine or teaching into which its dogma expands there must be long periods

of theological culture and freedom. Theology is tentative doctrine; doctrine is selected theology. The doctrine of the Church is a corporate property, but theology is an individual or sectional pursuit. The corporate doctrine is the precipitate of much free theology, which is the doctrine in the making. Doctrine is tentative compared with dogma, and theology is tentative compared with doctrine. The error of the Roman Church is to make its full doctrine final dogma. Both the doctrine and the theology of a Church will be what its germinal dogma make them under varying conditions. If there are types of doctrine according to each Church, there is still more variety of form and result in the theology of competent individuals or groups.

But the chief object of theology is not to provide matter for the individual pulpit, nor scope for the individual mind, but to prepare material for the doctrine by which the collective Church preaches its dogma to the intelligent world, ‘placarded’ and writ large. Freedom is always secondary to truth, individual freedom to collective truth. The truth is the end to which freedom is but means. The truth is the seed, and freedom is but the field.

Theology is there for the sake of doctrine and not simply to exercise mind. They react on each other. Doctrine produces theology, but in turn theology is always reacting on the doctrine it inherits either appreciatively or critically, but always, whether positively or negatively, in the way of evolution. It is the sterile amateur that starts upon theology ignorant of its historic stages. It is the sign of a crudity seldom outgrown to begin by making a clean sweep of the belief of the past in order to clear the ground for a new freedom or a new fabric. And what we mostly find as the result is a plot of waste ground surrounded with high and narrow walls, covered with derelict bricks, and coated with straggling weeds, where rises a battered and weathered hoarding which once intimated that this was the site for the Church of the future, and subscriptions may be paid to a treasurer whose name is illegible, and whose accounts are now closed, for in fact he is some time dead.

It is sometimes odd sometimes sad to see ardent and dogmatic apostles of evolution who would apply it everywhere except in man's treatment of the very highest things,

the dogmatic of the Church. It shows the Philistine effect of a narrow dogma like natural evolution to find in theology nothing but a petrifaction. It is to be hoped that the triumphs of last century in the evolutionary history of doctrine may at last reach such belated minds, rend their cells, and open to them a new horizon if not a new world. If doctrine is the scientific expansion of dogma, and if, in science, there is no finality, then doctrine must go on being edited, revised, and enlarged by the theological activity which it sets free in various minds. Doctrines are not graven images. They are not to be smashed or upset. Nor are they just to be carried about in the intervals when they are not locked up. They are living things of the soul, with a need and power to grow. The progress of doctrine is not reconstruction from ruins, it is evolution from stages. Religion may work by convulsions and conversions like the Reformation, but theology does not. But indeed, when we hear talk of destroying the theology of the past, it is mostly from scientific, or literary, or otherwise incompetent people —incompetent, I mean, in the sense that they have not studied that past, or did not

study it at the plastic time when their mental habit was made. In respect of the Church they are either outsiders or catechumens. If they knew the Church, they would know the unspeakable value of its doctrine to it ; if only, for instance, as a guide and power to the young minister, and as a protection from his idiosyncrasy to the Church in his charge. It is not indeed a police authority, but it is a Greatheart guide, a corporate intellectual conscience. It is a condensation for the minister of the long, profound, exalted, and often tragic but always triumphant experience of the seasoned soul of the Church whose minister he is. For the doctrine of a Confession is not a decree but a register of faith. It is faith's thermometer for guidance rather than its governor for obedience. It does not prescribe but it does confess. It is not an edict but an utterance. It brings not a guarantee but an index. It is a resolution of the Church rather than an enactment. It declares rather than enjoins, and preaches rather than compels. It is exhibited rather than imposed. It radiates influence rather than applies force. It is not a statute but a manifesto, not laid upon our neck but writ

large before our eyes, and lighted up upon our spiritual imagination. Nothing saddens one more sometimes than the intellectual ingratitude of the Christian whether to his theological education, his ancestral past, his Church's mental soul and moral wealth for two thousand years. It is the lack, so fatal to Christianity, of the historic sense or the Catholic consciousness.

CHAPTER III

VARIATIONS OF DOGMA AND ITS CONCENTRATION

I AM afraid, however, that here I shall be met with the remark that, in making the distinction I do between dogma and doctrine, and in placing dogma where I do as the germ and norm rather than the crystallized enactment of the Church's doctrine, I have history against me, and that I am even taking liberties with it. It will be pointed out that in usage dogma is the superlative of doctrine and not its positive; that it is not the rich kernel of doctrine but its dry husk or wilted blossom; that it is not simple but elaborate, not brief but long, not rich but faded or frozen; that it is something more rigid than doctrine and not less; that it is doctrine made saerosanct, final, and even congealed, by councils and popes. It will be said further that it was hung about the neck of the Church; and often not by the Church itself as an amulet, but by the State

as a millstone ; for that the Emperors, in the dogma-making era, riveted upon the Popes, in a gaunt Byzantinism, the chains from which these might otherwise have escaped. And so on. It is easy to forecast the criticism to which I have exposed myself. I beg you to believe that it has not been left out of account. And I venture also to remark in passing that criticism would often disappear if it were confined to the only criticisms really valuable, namely those which had not occurred to the competent author himself.

Let us examine the point thus raised, however, bearing in mind especially that we are not dealing with dogmas but with the idea of dogma. When we have discussed the relation of dogma to a Church, it is a farther question, which I do not now handle, whether the items of it should be few or many, long or short. Dogma, I have said, is the truth of what makes the Church, the potent knowledge but not the exact science, of something which is bound up with the Church's creation, and final for man's eternal weal or woe. It is the statement of the Church's one possession, of her fiducial deposit, of something which the Church can never conceivably hold

as other than true without ceasing to be a Church, of something which is the direct gift of God whose gifts are without repentance or withdrawal. Revelation, indeed, is not there to convey supernatural truth, but it conveys God in an act which must be stated and cannot be stated except as such truth —truth not scientific but sacramental for God's access to the soul. The thing so stated, therefore, is of supreme objective and creative value, as distinct from the subjective and tentative developments which form the theology of sections or individuals. This first stated truth is moreover integral to the enacted truth of revelation ; for a great word kindled by a great deed is also part of the whole deed. And it forms the element of continuity, identity, and tenacity in all the evolution of Christian thought. All future doctrine must take its departure from it, and refer to it as both fontal and normative. It expresses particularly not what Christianity has in common with all other religions but what is peculiar to it. It crystallizes the factors which are creative and unique for the Church's existence and progress. It is the element of certainty in all that the Church holds. It

has the massive and tense simplicity which belongs to the Bible, and which appeals to the general mind. And yet it forms a basis for all the subtle and detailed excursions of theology in dealing with the multiplied problems of culture.

But let me here repeat that, if the word dogma is incurably bound up with its use in Catholicism, I am not wedded to it. I am willing to take another word which may express with less friction and more happily the essence of the Christian Gospel. If I were driven from the word dogma, I would try to escape into the word Kerygma¹ for instance, which is the scriptural term to express the thing preached, the thing which makes Christianity Christian. It is the thing preached that matters ; the word for it is secondary. There is for Christianity a stateable, creative and unique act of God, cosmic and eternal, and germinal of all the Church and its truth. Call its expression by any word you like. But I do not want to drop the word dogma, and give a present and a monopoly

¹ Since this was written I have found that Basil uses δόγμα and κήρυγμα for the esoteric and the exoteric action of the Gospel in the Church.

of it to the Roman form of Catholicism. And this for two reasons. One is aesthetic; I would not part with any great and venerable term which has played a stirring part in the spiritual history of Christendom, so long as I could keep it with a due regard to its honest use, and one true to its historic evolution. Which leads me to my second reason. The word has already a long and not stationary past. It has a history and an evolution. And it will be a part of my business to show what this evolution is, and to plead that it ends in such a use of the word as I desire to make. I mean that we are historically entitled, and even committed, to reduce it from an elaborate and statutory plexus of theology to the brief pregnant statement of the one creative Gospel posing itself in its intelligible content, which is also the intelligible base of the Church. It is the self-revelation of Christ to the intelligence of faith. If we allow the Roman form of Catholicism the monopoly of a word so great, we give away also our right to call ourselves Churches. We give away our own case when we present to Rome the monopoly of a word equally great and venerable, the word Church. If we claim

to be Churches, we claim to use a word in which the great hierarchical Churches claim the sole and vested interest. And, if we give them the monopoly of a word so integral to the Church idea as dogma or final doctrine, we have practically presented them also with the monopoly of the word Church. What we feel when we are misled to despise dogma is but another phase of the same feeling, the same idea, with which Catholicism denies the word Church to us.

So that, if you object to using the word dogma in the reduced sense for the vital final core of revelation, the creative word or marrow of the Gospel, you must also deny yourself the use of the word Church for the single community gathered about that Gospel word. The two things are correlative—Dogma and Church. The Church will be as its dogma. If the dogma is one, the Church will be one. If the dogma be systematic, the Church must be institutional. But, if it be claimed that the single simple community is a true Church, with the power that makes and marks a Church, that cannot be if dogma be elaborate and systematic. It has not the sweep of mind to realize or defend such œcumical truth.

Its necessary dogma must be brief and fontal. The abandonment of a great doctrinal system with a catholic compass, like Calvinism, was sooner or later inevitable in Independency; but it fell over into the rejection of anything dogmatic, and that has led to a granulation of Church interests which it is now seeking to repair by a cautious increase of Church organization.

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In making good my use of the term dogma, I would point out that the word has denoted at least three different things at different times, while always connoting the essential meaning I have just described as a sum or rather a seed, of saving knowledge, short or long. It has run through an evolution of three stages according as the standard of its decision has been the Church, the Bible or the Gospel, according as Catholicism has been Roman, Protestant, or Evangelical. The use I make of it I would justify as the latest stage of that evolution as it reverts to the New Testament type; as the necessary form taken by the idea of dogma, if the standard is the Gospel and not a book or a theology. It is the statement of whatever is

regarded as revelation, and it has changed with that conception.

For the Byzantinism of the Eastern Church, dogma, as the sum of saving knowledge, was decided by the Councils, and ratified by the Emperor as it is now ratified by the Pope. For the Roman Church it was fixed by the Councils alone, of which the Pope became Emperor. To many (notably to Harnack) dogma proper ended with the great Lutheran breach in the Western Church. And certainly Protestantism has no dogma in the old sense, because it did not appeal to continual councils as the Roman Church did. So, if we speak of the Protestant dogmas, as we freely do in connexion with the great confessions, we have already changed the sense of the word. And it is a very great change with this change of venue. From the Councils Protestantism turned to appeal to the written word, and sought a reasoned word from the Bible. From decrees of Councils, accessible and intelligible to the few, it referred itself to the Bible, which it placed in the hands of all, and whose statements were held to be clear to all. The authority passed from an infallible Church to an infallible Book. Dogma was the co-ordina-

tion and exposition of all the doctrinal statements in the Bible. It was a compendium of Biblical theology. It was to contain all the truth in Scripture, and nothing which could not be proved from Scripture. So much of the old conciliar dogma was retained as could stand that test.

But early Protestantism still carried to the Bible the mediaeval mind. Its orthodoxy tended to become intellectualist, tended to continue the mediaeval intellectualism (only working in a new material), especially as the fires of Luther's inspiration died down. The Reformed Church became as scholastic in its different way as the mediaeval had been. Now, mediaeval theology fell by suicide with the keen weapon of its own dialectic, which, whetted by Duns Scotus, took its last and sharpest edge in the Socini. And so it was with the old Protestantism. One intellectualism was eaten up by another equally voracious. Orthodoxy, or the identification of true faith with pure doctrine, nearly wrecked the Reformation in the next century. For it was vulnerable to another order of Rationalism in the Illumination, and especially to the scholarly criticism of the Bible, which brought

down the bench where the appeals had been heard. Reason then took the place of Scripture ; and dogma was removed to philosophy. Philosophic dogma became the new arbiter of truth—as it is to-day in those belated sections of the public mind which still innocently cherish the Illumination and its rationalism in the midst of an age which leaves it behind. Science is more accessible to the public than philosophy, and its appetite (and indeed need) for dogma was met by crystallizing the ideas associated with natural law. Scientific or speculative principles, like Evolution or Monism, became the statutory dogmas of the new age, and the standards of all truth. Here again we have a serious change both in the use and quality of the dogmatic idea, but one reverting to type ; for the word and the idea of dogma were first borrowed from the philosophic schools of Greece, which cohered in a fixed tenet.

But within the Protestant Church the idea of a dogma had not become extinct. It was stunned with the blow it had received in the destruction of Scriptural infallibility, but it was not killed. It could not be killed while the Church remained a Church at all. And amid

the confused but recuperative movements of the nineteenth century there was slowly emerging a new positivity adjusted to the new conditions. The Church was on its elbow, collecting its senses, and looking round. The dogmatic element began to recover from its swoon, and its eyes opened to two things. First it realized that its positivity was as indispensable as ever (since natural dogma challenges the Church for a supernatural); and, second, it recognized that it must become more portable; it must undergo a great reduction from the old range of dogmatic truth. The Bible was not the wreck that the first confident critics supposed they had made of it. There was a Bible within the Bible, which the dissector's knife could not reach. Criticism of the Book might be free, so far as faith in the Gospel was concerned. The positive revelation, which all could verify, was there even if the infallible book of the orthodox was gone. The Bible was there for the Gospel, which it conveyed sacramentally rather than stated categorically. The history was there if the record was re-edited and reconstrued. The historic salvation was still there by grace through faith. The Gospel was there, though

it arrived with far less luggage. And not only was it there but, being disencumbered, it was very mobile. And it stood out as the supreme thing, for whose sake existed both the old Church and the old Book. But, however disencumbered, if it was a Gospel at all, it must be dogmatic. All religion is dogmatic, and the greatest the most so. A Gospel is not arguable. And Christ's by its very nature was a final Gospel. He never thought of a successor nor of a superior. At its heart His Gospel was as dogmatic as mathematics, and more eternal. It was the supreme certainty of the spiritual Reality in things, of the imperishable moral world, the principle of the whole world's last judgment, the final force and standard of all the moral consummations most deep in things and most devoutly to be wished. Disentangled, but not severed, from both Church and Bible, the Gospel stood out as the new authority for the human soul, as real and fontal for theology as Nature is for science. Wherever you have a real authority, you have something dogmatic in its nature. And with a new authority you have a new dogma.

Once more then the idea of dogma changes its form to secure its identity. It becomes

different in order to remain the same. The dogmatic place once taken by an extended, an intricate, *theology* comes now to be occupied by the reduced but intensified *dogma* of that authoritative Gospel which was so creative both for Church and Bible, and which remains so constitutive (and not merely regulative) for the interpretation of the Bible and for the Church's life. Dogma becomes the statement, not about man's extensive thought, but about God's intensive fact, not of the Church's belief but of God's deed of Gospel, which carries all the Church's doctrine latent in it. It is truth which can never but be true, amid all the Church's growth and change. It is crucial for the eternal destiny of the race. It was and is always creative, essential, for a Church. It is objective as God's gift ; it is not thrown out by man at God. Such a statement of it as I have quoted from Paul is not a tentative definition by the Apostle ; it is a gift to us, inspired by God (I do not of course mean in its verbiage) as expressing the very marrow of His self-revelation. The statement is not indeed the revelation, but it is integral to it. It is its self-precipitation. It is the permanent, frontal, tenacious, and identical thing in all the stages of the

Church's waxing and manifold confession. It is profoundly simple and inexhaustibly creative. It is the thing most peculiar to Christianity, unshared by any other creed, and yet the key of them all. And it teems with a vast variety and latitude of theological interpretation—so long as the types of interpretation do not take its life. A Church of the Gospel must have such a dogma. It is Christ's self-revelation expressed in the form of truth as distinct from its form in action, from both of which it is equally inseparable. The Gospel is its own dogma as soon as it is announced. Its dogma is its statement of itself. It is its own statement of its purpose, and not a product of its evolution. It is the facial expression by which we identify it, and not the schedule of its business. It is the thematic motive, and neither the lyric impression, nor the symphonic elaboration. And it must be there to make a Church, whether it be written and subscribed, or unwritten, tacit, and honourably understood.¹

¹ In this simple, pregnant, creative use of the word dogma we but return to the sense it bore in the earlier fathers like Ignatius, Clement, Origen, Chrysostom or Eusebius. They used it to mean no truth inferred or deduced, none with scientific, or ecclesiastical, or other subjective form, but as the fundamental description of

If we accept the indubitable claim by the New Testament of finality for its distinctive Gospel, the question about a written or an unwritten dogma is vain. The New Testament is our only source of knowledge or statement about Christ or His Gospel, and it is a historic and written document. And it does stake everything, and it co-ordinates everything, upon God's central act, purpose and principle with the world. The nature of that act it states in such passages as I have named. It crystallizes there its message, its meaning, and its ground for being—its dogma. To such dogma, thus written in one or another form, every public representative of the Church is pledged ; and it does not matter whether he take the pledge by manual subscription, or by

the Gospel without which Christianity did not exist. It was a use no doubt transferred from the Stoics, about whose rallying tenets both Seneca and Marcus Aurelius speak under that name, as being fundamental for the reason, brief for ready use in life, the root of knowledge, the material of the body of truth, the ground elements (*στοιχεῖα*) or principles of all systems, the heart of life, and so on—things ultimate and given, not demonstrated nor discovered but assumed or revealed. So that, had these fathers been called to reduce their dogmas to one, such a passage as I quoted from Paul would have met their idea of what dogma was for the Church.

his petition for leave to minister in a Church with that historic foundation, origin and commission.

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Let me reinforce my case by reference to what has been taking place in the Roman Church with its extraordinary history during the last hundred years. If we turn aside to that great home of elaborate dogma, we note a tendency which points in the same direction as I am endeavouring to travel. We note the same gravitation towards a fonsal article, as the note of a living and conquering Church.

Few things are more striking in ecclesiastical history than the resurrection from the dead of the Roman Church during the last century. At the end of the eighteenth century it was in a state of weakness and collapse which might have seemed to an observer the verge of extinction. It was a valley of dry bones, which to all natural appearance could never live again. It reflected on a larger scale the state of the Anglican Church, and indeed all the Churches, at the same period. And now ! Now Catholicism has never been so commanding and so full of life since its mediaeval days. I am speaking of those continental conditions where Rome

is really tested, rather than of British; and there no single institution has, on the whole, drawn so much profit out of the manifold ferment and even turbulence of the nineteenth century as the Roman Church. It has stood to gain directly out of the great romantic movement by the food which that brought to the deep, mystic, and sacramental side of faith; and out of the great liberal movement it has gained indirectly, by the reaction to it of those who felt that there must be some refuge and some stay amid a rationalism that was dissolving and flattening all. It has gained from the rise of the historic sense, with its stress upon history rather than science or philosophy as the locus of revelation, and upon evolutionary continuity, especially in doctrine. I need but mention the enormous value to Rome of the application given to the principle of doctrinal development by Görres, Möhler, and Newman. It has also known how to turn to account both the aspirations of the people for freedom and the efforts of the dynasties to repress them. Truly it has not been spiritual always in the weapons it has used. And some of them have been poisoned. But we shall never explain such a tremendous revivification

by means of the inferior motives and tactics. It cannot be explained by the machinations of the priesthood or the curia ; and, for one thing, because the laity have taken an unprecedented part in it. By way of analogy we may take the corresponding development in the Anglican Church. What differentiates the state of that Church to-day from its state a hundred years ago ? The difference is not due to ecclesiastical devices, to the strategy of the bishops or Church politicians, active as these have been. It is due to two things far higher—to the Evangelical movement with its doctrine of Grace, and to its spiritual successor, the Oxford or Anglican movement, with its doctrine of the Church. It is these that have saved the Church of England. And so in the Roman branch of Catholicism. The resuscitation has been due to nobler, deeper forces than man's device. It has really meant a great spiritual revival, such as Anglicanism certainly has gone through. Ultramontanism has not conquered as a mere piece of Jesuitry, much as it owes to the Jesuits. It represents the work of many spiritual, learned and powerful men, the religious force of the romantic movement, the soul's protest against a faith that was only

rational, or even essentially so, the appeal to the deep religiosity of great masses of the people, the devotion and sacrifice of millions of its members, and especially the passion for authority and certainty so deep in human nature and roused the more by our spiritual insolvency. This last is what I am most concerned to point out. It has been due to a vast movement of religious concentration and reduction. I do not mean that Rome has followed Liberalism into a minimalist religion, a spiritual vitalism with little positive, and no final, content, reducing Christianity to the spiritual core of Humanity, to the least common denominator of all the religions, and giving it a cosmopolitan breadth at the cost of the unique and crucial things of the Cross. The development of Roman dogma has gone on. But how has it gone on ? Not to amplify but to condense, not to load up the creed so much as to make it portable, to concentrate all the dogmas in one with a *fides implicita* ever more implicit. The Vatican Council of 1870 crowned a long doctrinal evolution by practically compressing the whole of Catholicism into one dogma—belief in the authority of the Church as concentrated in the Pope. The layman must

indeed accept the whole range of Christian doctrine, but he can and must do it only by an “implicit faith.” That is to say, he cannot do it by a judgment of the doctrines on their merits, which is beyond him, but he must do it by accepting one portmanteau article, namely, a Church acting by a Pope that judges and decrees these doctrines for him, and that carries the whole compass of Catholic truth implicit in itself. Now as never before Roman faith is faith neither in the mass nor in the priesthood but in the Church made absolute in the Pope. The whole Church has passed on to place itself in the same relation to the Pope as the individual must take to the whole Church. For bishop and boor alike all dogma has been, I will not say, reduced, but compressed into one—“I believe in the Church infallible in the Pope.” Again let me remind you that this is something more than a piece of Church chicanery. It is not mere jerry-mandering by astute tacticians. It represents the summit of a long series of spiritual development, whether we think it is the right line or not. It is the result not of plotters but of remote and potent principles; and we are in no position to combat these principles till we understand them and

their profound action. Popular polemics here miss the point, as usual. Mere "No Popery" excursions and alarums are fumbling beside the mark. We can hardly exaggerate the logic and the value for Catholicism of bringing everything back to centre upon a living *personality* in every age, who contains in himself the life and destiny of the most impressive and venerable *institution* in the soul's history. As, at the first, the presbytery passed into the bishop because so many questions about teachers and their teaching were better judged by a person than a committee, so now at the last. As the Church aims at being a spiritual empire, it gravitates to personal rule, with its unity and effectiveness.

All dogmas reduced to one, the Church, and that one incarnated in a living person, actual, accessible and historic for every age, dogma made pithy, personal, and social—that way lies the secret and principle of the great revival of the Roman Church. And, if we do not go as far as Rome, if we stop at Anglicanism, we find the same principle, with the exception of the Pope, who is replaced by the Episcopate. The principle, which has made High Anglicanism the ruling power in the English Church, is,

“I believe in the living Church and its hierarchy, and I commit myself to its otherwise generous creed.” Our attitude to that position must not be mere protest and negation. And we may take this lesson home as we pass. There is no future for a Church which does not believe in itself, that is timid about dogma, suspicious or careless about the Church idea or negligent of a Church’s creed. But we must concentrate and dogmatize on the Gospel as Rome does on the Church.

§

Dogma tends to concentrate, instead of dissipating into mere sectional opinion, wherever the Church is taken in earnest. The question for the Church therefore is, What is to be our concentrated dogma ? It is not, How shall we get rid of dogma ? It is, How shall we make accessible and intelligible the positive seminal dogma that makes the Church ? It is not, How shall we reduce Christianity to the general principles of spiritual religion everywhere ? It is, How shall we make religion a vital centre and not simply a warm atmosphere, a soul food and not a hot bath, a power instead of

a treat? The Catholic solution is, of course, impossible for us. Much as we need to raise our conception of the Church we cannot make the Roman submission to it; we cannot treat the Church as the incarnation prolonged, and therefore as an object of faith. The Church is for us the product of the Incarnation, not its elongation. On the other hand, the days are gone, even for us, when we could simply replace the Church by the Bible, and profess ourselves ready to believe anything which could be shown to be there. No belief is scriptural simply because it may be met with in the Bible. We do not believe in the contents of the Bible but in its content, in what put it there, and what it is there for. For it is a means and not an end. We believe in the Gospel, the Gospel of God's Grace justifying the ungodly in Christ's Cross and creating the Bible for that use. To cease to believe that is in principle to go outside the Church. It may be held of course that the Kingdom of God is best served in Humanity not by a Church but by a Christianity ethical, enthusiastic, fraternal, formless, and churchless; that is another question; but for a Church that

doctrine of grace can never cease to be true, central, objective, and distinctive ; it is simple and profound, germinal of all truth distinctively Christian, and creative of the whole Church. The brief and pregnant statement of that Gospel is our dogma, which has all Christian theology implicit in it. And, whether we are coping with the growing spiritual power of Rome, or with the growing power of a world which becomes more and more organized upon a Pagan base or a Humanist religion, we must shut down on our central dogma as Rome does. Concentration, positivity is the condition of a true unity and powerful comprehension. Our only hope lies in having for our central dogma one more Christian than Rome's, more Evangelical than Sacramental. It is not in scorning the dogmatic idea. Christianity cannot continue to live without a Church. And the Church cannot live without a positive, final, creative centre, which cannot be a rite but must be an act of moral redemption set forth in all its words and rites. This when it acts in power is the Church's Gospel; and when it acts as truth it is the Church's dogma ; and when it unfolds its universal and eternal wealth it is the Church's theology and doctrine.

CHAPTER IV

CREED, SUBSCRIPTION AND UNITY

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WE come to a very practical yet delicate question when we ask the position of formula and subscription. The connexion of a doctrine (written or unwritten) with a Church becomes crucial for its ministers and teachers. And a short easy exit is sometimes sought by urging that either dogma or doctrine which has to be subscribed by each teacher encourages hypocrisy more than it promotes belief or protects the Church.

On this head it may be said, first, that surely a Church (if it do not exist for the sake of its clergy) has a right to require of its public representatives some overt expression of agreement and compliance with that which is the message in its trust, the reason for its existence and for its claim upon the world. If a man seek the privilege of public work in the Church's pale, and of using its

facilities with the public, he ought to accept publicly the responsibilities and limitations it imposes. There is no privilege without responsibility, no liberty except by the acceptance of corporate limitation. A Church is not a troop of intellectual Janissaries nor a corps of theological scouts, nor a loose crowd of sympathizers bustling round a wounded world. It is not a society for untrammelled spiritual research, nor a company of souls in search of adventures, nor a bevy of amateur nurses for a race diseased. It has in trust the Gospel of a God who is labouring more than all of us. It has this positive truth in trust. But it is only in trust. It preaches the truth, but God gives the power. It brings the medicine, but God the cure. It does not save, it applies the Saviour and His salvation. It has the Gospel in trust, not in fee. It is a mandatory, and not a proprietor. Its position is fiduciary. It has no freehold in its truth but only a charge. And the duty lies on each generation of it to see that the trust go unimpaired as well as unhampered to the next. It is always the duty of the Church that prescribes the rights of its individuals. And it is especially its duty to its young pos-

tulants to harness to a positive Gospel their valuable instinct of novelty and liberty. It is not fair or kind to leave them to think that a vague religiosity, a free spirituality, is equipment enough for its pulpits. And, if any individual in office in the Church feel that he is out of touch with its fundamental confession, and not merely out of tune with its general spirit, if he feel unable, with all his subjective Christianity, to accept what its objective and creative central dogma prescribes, he might well consider whether he should not retire from his office (which after all is the Church's more than his). It does not follow that he should go out of membership. If he is competent, he is valuable in his true place. I speak only of office and its conditions, trusts, and obligations. Nor need he cease to develop and promote his own views, either among his friends or by the press. He may in this way, as a private thinker, make his contribution to theological progress, and prepare the way for such modifications of Church doctrine as from time to time are required. But, if he surrender the Church's central and creative dogma he should not exploit a position which only that dogma confers. It becomes then a

position too ambiguous and compromising for his moral effect. We are past the days of *theological tests*, even for the offices of the Church, to say nothing of the State ; but that only makes more imperative the *evangelical test*, for the teachers of the Church at least. If a positive and historic Gospel of Christ's grace rather than His excellencies be the reason and secret of the Church's existence, it is neither intrusive nor inquisitorial, it is a plain duty for each Church to require that its agents express their conformity as they seek power to act in its name. It is but Egoism to treat any Church as a pedestal for individual gifts or views. And it is often self-ruinous Egoism.

§

But farther, and with more close regard now to the plea that the confession of a vital dogma fosters hypocrisy in a Church. That is a risk which attends every society with a definite basis beyond mere sympathy or fraternity. Take the case of civil society. If there is anything corresponding to a dogma in general society, it is the institution of marriage. But against its obligation could be urged a similar danger. There is always the danger

of people who only live in concubinage or some form of polygamy (concurrent or successive, legal or loose) being tempted to injure their tender consciences by pretending that they were married, in order to enjoy the advantages which society opens only for its palladium of monogamy. And there is always the plea that the continued union of incompatibles breeds an unreality fatal to the honesty of the relation.¹

It is here that the distinction in my mind between dogma and doctrine may be found to help the situation. The *badge* of the Church may be a theological confession, a symbol more or less elaborate, but the *bond* and essence of the Church is religious; it is an objective faith, and such a plain and central statement of that faith and its object as I have defined dogma to be. The one is the Church's flag, the other its foundation. I do not see how any one can honestly claim to belong to a Church whose Gospel of grace he rejects as soon as it is stated in the simplest terms which are adequate at all. If you are but a Theist you

¹ For the farther discussion of this point may I refer to my little book on *Marriage* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1912).

must dogmatize on a personal God—you do not say He is probable or is an opinion. No society can cohere upon such a confession as

Wer darf Ihn nennen,
Und wer bekennen,
Ich glaube Ihn ?
Wer empfinden,
Und sich unterwinden
Zu sagen ; Ich glaub Ihn nicht ?
* * * * *

Gefühl ist alles.

The faith that makes a Church is simply the personal response to a Gospel which must be conveyed to the soul in certain terms. Such dogma must be at once the foundation of a Church and the personal confession of the individual, and above all of the officer of the Church.

But it is otherwise when we are dealing with any statement of its developed doctrine which the Church may see fit to make, declaring its collective attitude to the thought of the world at a certain juncture. Such a statement is a corporate and average thing only. It expresses the saving and constituent trust of the Church in the form of the regulative mind of the Church. It may be decided by a majority, whereas the dogma is incumbent on all. It is the public property of the Church

rather than an individual obligation. As the Church made it, the Church can amend it ; but, till amended, it is the historic property, badge and symbol of the Church (though not its bond). It is not, in the same sense, the badge or property of the individual. It may not adequately express his conception of the relation of the Church's vital principle to the thought of his time. To illustrate from a parallel. He may share the national life, and be assessed for a tax without being satisfied with the design of the national flag, or even with the current policy. So he must be required to accept the central *dogma* which creates the Church, but he need not be required to subscribe the Church's declaratory *doctrine*. The one is mandatory, the other but expository. An evangelical confession is not a theological test. The value of a corporate declaration is independent of its subscription by each officer of the Church. It is average and not individual. It is solidarity and not atomic. It may be accepted by individuals without being professed. Indeed, when subscription is required, the doctrine ceases to be a declaration, and it becomes a creed, with all the dangers that beset a

theological test as distinct from a publication of saving faith. All that the individual says in respect of the Church's doctrinal symbol (as distinct from its central dogma) is this : "I desire to be member or minister of a Church whose faith and dogma have taken this corporate theological confession so far as gone. I accept this as historically true, as true, and as the best truth, in the circumstances of its origin. It is not quite satisfactory to me to-day ; but I am ready to wait and work till circumstances permit or compel my Church to modify the statement to the new situation." If there be any subscription,¹ it should be to the Church's dogma and not to its doctrine, to its Gospel and not to its symbol. And merit and profit within the Church, if such things be considered at all, should depend on faith and service to the Gospel ; and not on orthodoxy to the symbol. If that were well understood, the temptation to hypocrisy would be removed, and a man would be valued by his evangelical faith and not his theological fashion.

¹ I am not here settling the question whether there should be manual subscription or tacit acceptance. But acceptance there surely must be.

Were that so, the danger of hypocrisy, even from the symbol, would be a small thing compared with the vast advantage offered in the way of announcing the Church to the world; and especially in the way of guiding the earlier stages of theological growth in its minister. It is not fair, as I said, for his Church to leave him without any corporate indication of what he takes on hand, and what his communion expects of him. And, while it aided him to be true, in far more than an intellectual sense, it would protect his flock from the possible excursions of his individualism, the freaks of his idiosyncrasy, the crudities of his amateurism, and from all the loss of weight and influence that such things involve with the best of the public. It is possible in the blind pursuit of intellectual veracity to cease to be true in a more serious sense. The truth of the intellect may be pursued at the cost of the truth of the personality. A man may be true to truth and false to God, theologically true and religiously false. We are often reminded of that by the assailants of orthodoxy. It is just as possible in respect of heresy. It is possible to be purist as to truth without being holy in soul, and for lack of holiness to fail to see God amid much moral scrupulosity.

When one reads of the conscientious scruples which have led many an able and honourable man contemplating the ministry to retire from the Church, and finally to antagonize it, one cannot but feel that in some cases much of the objection arose from the loss of the Church idea. It arose from a certain atomic scrupulosity, from a mental egoism, an exaggeration of individual responsibility for every statement in the symbol. And with that goes, one can sometimes see, a rationalistic and atomic lack of mental flexibility or moral imagination. There is lacking the mental subtlety (in spite of all the mental acuteness) which enables the student to cope with the thought of those powerful and fine minds who chiefly shaped a faith so spiritual as Christianity and stamped thought's image upon its creed. The critic applies to the document the same stiffness of mind and rigidity of treatment which he properly objects to in the orthodox and popular treatment of Scripture. It is the same mentality working in a different direction. If the Athanasian Creed (apart from its comminations) were understood psychologically, as the expression above all of a corporate spiritual experience couched in the mental calculus of

the time while correcting its errors, how much more patiently and fruitfully it would be viewed. The metaphysic which is being found to underlie modern religious psychology, and especially the Christian psychology of grace, is coming to replace that which lay behind the intellectual treatment of nature, and gave the science its name as metaphysic. But we are forced upon metaphysic still. If the critic had more of the religion that made the Creed, he would read it with more soul behind his eyes, and more sense of the kind of reality before them. And it is a general truth that destructive criticism may be as much due to poverty of religion as to power of mind.

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It is frequently said that, as Christianity spreads into the sympathies, ideals, and liberties of Humanity, there is the less need for positive beliefs, and much less use for their statement in an explicit creed. Positivity, it is said, limits the range of sympathy, and definition restricts the area of liberty. The underlying notion seems to be that the first object of a faith is to include men, or to promote action, rather than to confess and glorify God. Faith is urged to extend its power

rather than to establish it, and to further the evolution of Humanity, rather than to own, honour, and guard in practice the one revelation God has given of the way in which alone mankind must reach its divine destiny. This is anthropocentric religion rather than theocentric. It is more engrossed with man than filled with God, more preoccupied than inspired. It has the leaven of the Pharisees, which works by infection instead of regeneration, preaches impressionism rather than repentance, and ends in insincerity. It is prone to act as if man saved man by God's facile help, instead of God saving man by man's earnest witness.

The truth is that the wider and more successful a spiritual movement becomes, the more it needs to be anchored or purified by a positive confession of its central truth, whether written or unwritten. It may be either, according as we think the object likely to be better secured ; which object is a clear understanding of God's purpose of grace, a sure response to it in penitent experience, and an effective application of it through a Church in the World. The success of every such living and creative movement draws into it a great number of people who are strange to its inner spirit and

dull to its peculiar genius, who are not mastered by its principle or subdued to its sanctity. They are attracted by its affinity with aspirations or ambitions of their own, by the help it promises for their ideals and causes, or by the support it brings to their own prejudices or convictions. It is ancillary for them and not absolute. They do not confess it so much as exploit it. By a refined simony they would purchase the spirit for their sympathies or uses, being more covetous of what it can do than obedient to what it reveals and requires. The variety and importunity of their aims thus tends to disintegrate the faith which the movement exists to serve. We cannot but recognize, for instance, how much wood, hay and stubble was swept into the stream of the Reformation ; till it was nearly choked, and certainly made to rage furiously in its course. Many were in the camp who were not for the King but for the spoil ; nor for the Church but for a social millennium, or even a personal end. It was a cave of Adullam for many of the discontented and the disaffected of the day. And this is a risk proportioned always to the public character of the idea, and the sweeping nature of the change proposed. It

affects less, perhaps, movements which are abstractly spiritual, phases of a merely subjective, cloistered, and withdrawn piety. But it is a very serious danger to every programme which, like Christianity at its great moments, has the world for its parish, history for its sphere, and affairs for its element.

Now the spiritual liberty which is the conquest and the tradition of certain of the Free Churches appeals very strongly to the instincts of an age like the present (which it has done so much to create). It is an age of subjective but humanitarian individualism, in which there beats strongly both the passion of the social Utopia and yet of the natural and private freedom of man from man. But that is a quite different thing from the liberty created by Christ. The spiritual, moral, evangelical freedom with God which is directly created by the Gospel is a different thing from the natural freedom even of the spiritual man; which may use the Gospel as either a sanction, an engine, or an ally, but may equally reject it as a bondage and a bane. But this distinction of two quite different freedoms is far from clear to many, both of the better sort and the worse. And we draw

in a great number to whom the Free Churches are more welcome as free than as Churches. These Churches are popular often because they seem to furnish democratic facilities rather than because they provide a royal and spiritual obedience and seek first the reign of God. Obedience may be scouted, and even guidance resented. Hence, if there is no rallying-point fixed and clear (whether express or understood), such a Church is in danger of becoming a crowd of passionate freedmen, or even crotcheteers, in various kinds, a synagogue of the Libertines, who tend continually to pass from independency to recusancy, and to develop the fissiparous instincts of nature at the cost of a solidary life of Grace. Nor only so. If unsubdued to the living faith of the Church, being “cakes half-turned,” they may care for its truth and Gospel only up to its gifts and not up to its demands, only up to the point where it begins to impinge and claim upon the atomism or sectionalism which they really canonize. They are apt to treat their liberty as an end which truth serves rather than as the means by which truth prevails. A love of truth may become more interested in the quest than in

the quarry, and it may end in a supreme interest in the hunter. The love of truth itself needs to undergo conversion to the love of the Faithful and True God.

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In such a situation a Church may find it not only within its freedom to make explicit and public the truth which constitutes it a Church, but it may find such a declaration laid upon it as a moral duty to God, itself, and the world, if it is to remain a Church. The duty would then be laid on the Church as a Church, and not upon individuals. It is especially laid on the ministry of the Church, as the organ and trustee of its common consciousness in this respect, of its truth and its teaching. It is a case when the individual claim of liberty as against a Church ought to be postponed to the Church's liberty as against the world of the natural man and his kind of freedom. It was so in the early Church, whose creeds were not an intellectualist perversion, but a moral, mental, and corporate necessity. As the Church captured society, it became more and more of a duty to Christ to be explicit to culture about those realities of Christ put in its trust which made its standing difference from the

world. True enough, the creeds, once in being, in course of time became perverted in their use. From declarations of the Gospel whereby the Church delivered its soul in terms prescribed to it at a particular crisis by the mentality of the age, they became tests and palladia in themselves for all time—as if the creed were the centre of the Church's unity instead of the expression of it. That is confessional fanaticism. Faith does not live upon doctrines as such, but upon personal contact with those spiritual realities and powers which cannot be stated except in doctrines. None of the products of the Church, whether creed or episcopate, can be the centre source or condition of the Church's life, however imperative and valuable at a juncture. The business of a Church is not to preach its creeds or any other of its works, but to preach that faith and Gospel which is God's work, and which does not shrink, on due challenge, from making its confession in the appropriate credal form. There are ages when the form of confession which is most prescribed to the Church's conscience by the public situation may be more practical, political, or philanthropic. But the one form does not exclude the other, as in the antithesis so

current and so false. And the particular style of declaration demanded by one age is not necessarily that for another. In this respect the Church preserves its freedom to adjust its power and secret to the distinctive challenge of the time. If dissolving society require a strong Church, a confused intelligence calls for a positive belief. And to-day we seem to be in equal need of both.

§

When the Church had to encounter early Gnosticism in mortal strife could she have come out of it alive in any other way than she did ? Did her theological course then not save the future of Europe, civilization, and freedom ? Did not the same course continued save it when the Athanasian Creed was the battle hymn to which the Moors were beaten back at Roncevalles ? It was that Creed which saved the West from Islam. In the first centuries pagan Europe was swamped (like the culture of to-day) in an amorphous spirituality which was but the travesty of religion or freedom. Everything was fluid. There was no compass, no pole, no centre, no standard. All was in a cauldron of syncretism. The future and its permanent

liberty demanded nothing so much as a positive belief and authority, a norm pliant indeed but sure, a law flexible but effective, a centre where men could both rally and obey. These were found in Creed, Canon, and Episcopate. Creed was much more than formulary, Canon was much more than a closure, the Episcopate was more than clericalism.

Indeed says Köhler (*Gnosis*, p. 54), "If we look at the Christianity of that time in the largest perspective opened to religious-historical insight we shall see that the crisis that then rose in the evolution of faith only illustrates a general and inevitable law of such history. No religion can remain enthusiastic and free in its soul without being driven from time to time to fix its tradition." Protestantism found that to be so. Every religious community must. And if it is rent over the attempt that is better than to dissolve and decay. The process is an absolute necessity of its existence, and nothing which is such a necessity can really be a fall from the Ideal unless we are living with an ideal as abstract as a lunar rainbow. The bane is not the fixing of the tradition, but letting it rust into its place, and become permanent in the first

form. It is not fixed tradition that is fatal but frozen. It is not definition of belief that does the mischief; we must from time to time crystallize our creed—to be both honest and free; what does the mischief is the indefinite perpetuation of one definition.

Now it is the recurrence of Gnosticism that is the supreme spiritual peril in Christianity at this present hour. And it can never be countered by those whose abstract idealism or prickly atomism resists a creed in every form and use. Such views have an amateur stamp on them, and they condemn their Church to sterility for the Greater World. They are outside actual things, and indocile to actual history. But Gnosticism, old as new, has one good result. It compels the Church to define its position, to ask where it is, to close down on strategic points, to recall its stragglers and dreamers, to dress its ranks and concentrate its attack on the world. And nothing is so much needed for the Church's unity as these strategic points, their proper selection and a complete hold of them.

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There is much in the present situation which

is parallel with that of the fourth century in the respect I have named. It is now the fourth century since the rediscovery of apostolic Christianity ; and the Reformation principle has been moving among many parallel powers, social and intellectual, with a success that threatens to submerge its divine characteristic under its humanitarian and even spiritual affinities. Man's welfare obscures God's glory in a suicidal way. And there are very many (especially among the young and the untaught, who are now such a concern to the Church), to whom its Gospel appears to be no more than a most valuable (perhaps the most valuable) branch of spiritual culture, or moral civilization, or humane amelioration. They are tempted to think that any form of belief which is invested with a Christian spirit is a lawful thing in a Church, if only it promise to facilitate the humane ideal and promote fraternal fusion and social weal. That is an entire change of the Christian centre of gravity. It practically makes an anthropocentric instead of a theocentric religion, and it loses God's glory in man's career. *Ego et rex meus.* A fair millennium is our worship, and the glorious Lord Himself is not our place of broad rivers

and pleasant streams. It is quite possible that a situation should thus arise when the Church felt a confession to be as necessary as missions are, when it found itself as unable to do without some adjusted statement of its creative Gospel as to accept the confessions that arose before the modern age. It might then well enough be driven, not by ecclesiastical tactics, but by an evangelical obligation as urgent as any other social action, to state anew its one creative article of faith, and so to preserve its spiritual identity in the face of the new situation set up by a changing world ever more closely organized. This would be for the Church a social duty in a twofold sense—in the sense of its duty to itself as the society of Christ (with the mouth confession is made by the Church unto its salvation from disintegration); and in the sense of its duty to the society round it, to which it is Christ's apostle. You cannot do the Christian duty to Society without a dogma of Christ. The Church cannot be true to the supreme and final realities of its Gospel without making them known to the intelligence of an age pre-occupied with inferior realities. And the necessity becomes the more urgent as the cry for the union of the Churches becomes more irresis-

tible. That unity is possible only on an objective basis. It is the one Gospel that makes the one Church. The Church's unity does not lie in fraternal sentiment, in liberal freedom, in minimal truth, in uniformity of institutions, nor in a common work. It does not lie in sympathy, in liberty, in simplicity, in polity, nor in missions. It lies in the call which created and creates the Church, in the one historic Gospel and its personal confession, in the one universal work of God in Christ, in a dynamic centre and not a simple point, in its source and not in its sequels. It must rally not even to its Bible, but to that which made the Bible, to the Gospel which repeats itself in great variety within the Bible, as it does in a like variety within the various Churches that sprang from it. This must be our base and charter of unity, if what we are thinking of is not a mere unity of Christianity but a union of Churches. And that union of Churches is the only real way in which the unity of Christianity can be brought about. For Christianity is not a bodiless abstraction. It exists only concretely and historically—in its Churches. And it rests on that in all the Churches which comes down from above and not on anything which rises up from below,

on the gift of God and not the products of man,
on a salvation and not a democracy.

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The first thing we have to recognize in the creeds of the past is that, however lamentable may have been the proceedings of certain councils, the existence of the creeds was due to a moral necessity, rising at a crisis out of the nature of the Gospel as it faced the world. They were due to this rather than to an ecclesiastical necessity rising from the egoistic strategy or trades-unionism of a Church. We have farther to recognize that they are not robbed of their value because they are not inerrant and final. Such confessional inerrancy and finality is an impossibility to nature, and it is not congenial to grace ; and therefore it could never be a moral necessity. We shall then turn with a true perspective to the question whether a time could ever conceivably come again when circumstances should create for the Church a similar obligation to the Gospel, and evoke a similar confession of its truth and power in the compass and terms suggested by the need of the public mind.

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A Church, as soon as it is a believing Church, must above all else be a confessing Church, i.e. it must be more concerned to show forth the Lordship of Christ and His Gospel in its every special action and enterprise, than to hum with energy, develop achievement or commend a subjective liberty, whether individual or corporate. If a Church is, in its very life and genius, thus confessing Christ in various ways, instead of exploiting Him, even for Humanity, the question of a common confession of belief on due occasion should raise no difficulty in principle (unless mind must be unchristian). It is only one form of the witness borne by the Church's whole existence and action according to place and season, according to inner need or outer challenge. It would be bigotry to say that there could be no Christian community without a formal creed ; just as it would be to say the same in the absence of a stated and professional ministry. But for a Church that is historic, i.e. that passes the conventicle stage, enters the great stream of history, and influences affairs of every kind for the kingdom of God, both a ministry and a doctrine are in their place necessary. The first confession in the Church

was necessarily the confession in the apostolic preaching and teaching of the powerful facts. But this was bound to develop (and it did) so as to confess the *richness* of the realities these conveyed. The fact of the Redemption, the fact of the Redeemer, and the truth as it is in the Redeemer—all three made a necessary sequence in the Church's grasp of the power of God's salvation. It is quite true that we have in the praxis of the New Testament but the elements of such a formula as afterwards arose. All truth was at that warm time in a state of highly charged solution. The air was clear but electric. The revelation and the experience were completely blended, as for instance all the infinite value of marriage for society is latent in a first passionate love. And, were the subjective condition of the Church always that of the apostolic circles of the first century, the dogmatic *κιριψυγμα* need receive less special attention. The charisma would carry the dogma. No notion could be more modern or mechanical than that of a conference of apostles to draw up a creed which should bear their name and authority for ever (and yet omit the article of redemption!). But then, though there be no formula in the New Testa-

ment, there is also no stated and professional ministry. And the later formulation of ministry is quite parallel with the formulation of the message—to say nothing of the organization of the Church itself as a standing institution out of the charismatic conditions of the first communities. The defining of doctrine was but one of many fixtures morally necessary for the Church's witness of its gospel in history, though it was not necessarily stereotyped for ever. And it would be violent dogmatism against dogma to say that a statement of central belief could never, by any call of circumstances, become the Church's moral duty as the Grand Confessor of a Christ rich to heart and soul and strength and mind. It is all part of the necessary process of projecting faith from a private experience to a public power without secularizing it, the making of it intelligible without intellectualizing it. The question may of course be raised whether a Church is necessary for Christianity ; but for those who confess its necessity by remaining in it, and who grasp their position, there can be no question about the necessity of a distinctive and cognizable doctrine for the Church. No Church and no State can exist for the sole but

negative purpose of freedom. Question might only arise then whether that necessity is better served by a symbol stating the doctrine in the most simple and accessible form that does justice to its purpose, or by leaving it to a general understanding implicit, tacit, and honourable. One thing is certain. No Church could exist for the mere and sole purpose of religious liberty. Such an organized company would be but a netful of gas. The constant preaching and teaching of the Church does generate a universal type of doctrine, whether we will or no. Even the constant practice and use of public devotion, however "*extempore*," falls inevitably into a certain general or typical form, which marks both individuals and communions. The habitual action of the confessing Church treads out such paths and generates such types, which are not crustacean but vertebrate, which do not found faith but guide it, nor enclose it, but carry it; they form, as it were, the sunk rails upon which the precious freight must run. For a considerable period a tacit creed has held together certain communities. But it remains to be seen if such an understanding can stand the strain of the unprecedented conditions on which

faith now enters both within the Church and without. In regard to Independency in particular and its use, the supreme question is whether it has still the power to guard and apply in the world the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This form of the question is commended to the gravest consideration of those whom it chiefly concerns.

The principles of Congregationalism may exclude a common statement of *doctrine* (as above defined) as the bond between the Churches. But they do not exclude a common *dogma* which calls Christ Lord and God as a term of communion. Nor do they even exclude a common confession of ampler form, if due cause be shown. Only in that case it could have no more than a declaratory function, not an exclusory; it certainly could not be the foundation of a legal process. Such a common confession of doctrine would have but a temporary validity, and not permanent. When the occasion had passed it would not vanish but it would retire into history. The function of confessions is different from that of the Bible. They are but witnesses, it is judge. And it is judge only as Gospel, only in respect of its dogma. This

is the true Protestant position. It is expressed in the *Formula Concordiae*. The Bible is decisive, but the confessions are testimony only “as to the way in which the Bible in all matters of dispute in the Church is to be understood *by the living generation.*” And this is the position taken by the Savoy Declaration of the Independents in 1661.

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If exception be taken to the limitations imposed by a distinct type of confessed truth, this consideration may be offered. Without a common and focal Gospel we fall easy victims to limitation of a more serious kind—to the idiosyncrasies of an individual, the fashion of an age, or the egoism of Humanity. Some of these act at once, others require a generation or more to work out their results. But they are limitations, from which a final and exalting revelation is there to release us. It is there to settle and protect us with a universality and a catholicity which absorbs and utilizes the contributions of an individual or an epoch. It organizes the impressions of temperament, or the winning words of man’s wisdom, under the demonstration of the Spirit and of power ; where the popular tendency is to identify the

two. Remember that the effort to escape from finite limits is not the same thing as the perception of infinity.

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I end this Chapter on the keynote. A Church cannot live without a theology. If the Church's life is full and free, its theology will be the same—rich and liberal. For this purpose the Church must have its summaries with a dogmatic base which makes them distinct from the science of religion pursued in a university. And if the Church is in spiritual and mental health, it must prize its theological centres quite as highly as it prizes its philanthropic. The Church is on the down grade which cares more for the hospitals than for its colleges, and staffs them better. And to the end that theology may be always progressive and rich, it must have its base in a dogma which never ceases to be creative, and its home in the corporate consciousness of the Church. It must be preachable theology, commendable to the people. The Church is a social no less than a dogmatic product. And its power is always where the power of God truly and centrally

resides—in the conscience which rises to live in the redeeming act of God in Christ as the moral core and mystic power of Time and Eternity.

In some of the Free Churches the Christian spirit becomes detached from the Christian Word, and in others of them at war with it. The freedom loses its base in the truth, and therefore loses the guarantee of its own permanence. The impulse of the freedom is the mere expansiveness of natural religiosity, or the individualism of mystic spirituality, or of free thought. It is not found in a great and final liberating Word for the moral Soul. To this vague spiritualism dogma is abhorrent, because a historic redemption is so, or a final revelation, or an absolute Gospel. The growth of such freedom is only the growth of human nature turned religious. That is, human nature is free in itself. The freedom is but human nature coming to itself—with much help from God, indeed (where He remains); but it is only help that the freedom has from Him, not existence. He is a Liberator rather than a Redeemer. It is natural freedom rarefied and refined. It is not regeneration. It is not a new creation in Christ Jesus but an expansion in His atmosphere. Whereas the whole full-

ness of Christian freedom, the whole rich range of Christian theology, develops by its own logic from the source and dogma of our justification by new-creative Grace.

The essential thing about dogma is not its length, breadth nor thickness but its finality. And the fundamental difference between a dogmatic and an undogmatic Christianity is that for the former Christ has done the final thing for the human soul while for the latter He has but won the highest height. The one prizes Christ for His grace, the other for His excellency. The one calls Him Saviour in the new creative sense (and nothing is so final as creation) ; the other calls Him hero—the soul's hero no doubt but still its *beau ideal* and not its Redeemer. We need no other Redeemer, but we might have a finer ideal as the soul's sense grows of what is ideal and fine.

PART II

CHAPTER V

DOGMA AND THE STATE

THE question of an inalienable dogma has a very close bearing, beyond the Church's internal welfare, on its relation to the society amid which it lives, and especially to the condensation of that society in the State. And this is well worth a re-examination in fresh light.

A considerable change seems to be passing over the question of Church and State since the retirement to the rear in our social interests of the old individualism in which, for instance, the Liberation Society was born. The principle remains, but its envisagement has changed since Miall and Richards. The Oxford Movement and the schools of history have changed much. The solidary spirit, the social sense, has arisen in a new avatar ; it has come to pervade all classes as it never did before. The conception of a Society as having a certain personality of its own, as being much more than

the aggregate of its units, as subsisting and growing while these come and go—such a conception, if it existed at the time I name, existed to be repudiated by the Radicalism of the day whose sources were not Christian. This Radicalism applied its own atomic principles to the relation of Church and State, without asking too curiously whether they fitted even that idea of the Church which ruled the founders of Free Churchism in the first Separatist age. One of these changes should be particularly regarded in the new phase of the situation. It is the conception of History as a Unity, of Humanity as a Moral Organism, with a corporate soul and an evolutionary career. It is the growth of the historic spirit, almost the creation of the historic sense, since the middle of last century. Historic study and the idea of historic continuity lay hold of the public now in a way which is calculated to alter considerably the view that offered itself to the individualist temper or the snap-action mind reared on the metallic culture of physical science. Even physical science has now softened its contours and bated its dogmatism with its passage from the dominion of mechanics to electrical physics, and

from chemistry through biology to psychology.

It may be worth while, therefore, to make a few observations on the general change I have named, observations which must be suggestive rather than thetic, and more fragmentary than finished. If the nature and province of the State has altered in a way to horrify the publicists of two generations ago, corresponding changes may be expected in the idea of the Church. We have had since the Oxford Movement a vast elevation in the Church idea, and its rescue from many of the banalities and platitudes to which evangelicalism had sunk. We have a new sense of the development of doctrine, even in Rome. While, alongside of that, we have all felt the effect of the new light cast upon the early centuries of the Church by foreign scholars, often revolutionary, but often also influential with their compatriots in Anglicanism itself. I might allude to the only views now scientifically possible about the episcopate in the first century.

But there is something else. Not only the temper of the State, but also its behaviour, its legislation, has also changed, and changed in a way that does not leave the Church unaffected. We might expect some modification

of their relations if only one of the pair were considerably changed. If one side of a great relation change the other cannot remain quite the same. But we find a great change in both. And, in particular, it may be said that the more religious and humane the State grows in the *nature* of its legislation, so much the more impossible is it to realize how the inevitable separation of State and Church can mean that entire neutrality which has been the ideal of many in the past. The people of this country at least are little likely to accept the absolute secularization of the State; which would be an admission that civilization, or society, cannot become Christian but can only have a Christian society, in the shape of a Church, beside it or within it. But we cannot so divide either a soul or a people. The polar unity that connects both refuses to be cleft with a gulf across which nothing travels, or to suffer a paralysis which makes the right hand careless of what is done by the left. It is not as if one hemisphere of the soul could be Church and the other State, nor as if the Kingdom of God were irrelevant to either. We can no longer treat the State, with Augustine, as if it were the organization of splendid sin.

We cannot even call it secular in the old secularist sense. It is not a case, therefore, of ending all relation but of revising it and reconstructing it. This is the valuable lesson that is read by the present momentous proceedings in Scotland to those who retain the power to learn, and who court the opportunities to know.

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An absolute separation and neutrality between Church and State is impossible. Neither is an abstraction. Each is composed of individuals—to a large extent of the same individuals—but of individuals whose soul cannot be rent, and parted this way and that to Church and World. The same indivisible soul, the same moral personality, that worships in a Church works in a world. And, in proportion as each body, Church or State, acquires a corporate personal quality, an absolute neutrality is the more impossible. There must be practical relations between them, and neither will do its work for the Kingdom of God unless these practical relations are intelligent and sympathetic. The Church must not regard the State as but the area of party

polemic, nor the State the Church as only an object of patient contempt. The distinction between them is very deep and vital, but it is rooted in a connexion which makes the insulation of either out of the question. All we can (but must) aim at is a revision of the relation. And that not chiefly on the ground of political inequality, but to escape a relation incompatible with the Christian principle of the spiritual life and the moral personality. The Free principle moves the Church chiefly because prescribed by the principle of its Gospel, by its religion. If the principle of the Gospel clearly prescribed an establishment of the Church all the political pleas for equality would have to be ignored by Christian people. For since a Church is involved the question is ultimately religious and theological.

We have furthermore to consider the relation of the State not only to a Church but to the religious life of the nation. It is one thing to establish a particular Church on the ground of prerogative, or a sole divine right to be established, and another to establish it on the ground of convenience, as a *prima inter pares*, as the *doyen*, deputy, or mandatory of the rest in receiving the salute, and meeting the

religious occasions, of the State. If it be true that the more deep we go the more we realize the way in which State and Church interlace and react on each other, it is also true that as we go deeper we feel how their distinction grows with the growth of each. The distinction grows deeper both as the nature of the Church's spiritual principle is better understood, and both as the self-consciousness of the State expands. This is true between the various Churches. The best way to promote the union of the Churches is to deepen and correct in each the Church idea ; it is not to attenuate the Church sense. A union of Churches can only be effectual if it is real Churches that unite ; it becomes either worthless or impossible if they are toned down to be no more than religious associations. Their unity in Christ is much more than fraternizing ; it is their deeper share in the one Church whose fullness He is. Each must grow in the sense that it is a Church in its own way and form. So also is it in the true relation of Church and State ; it can be realized only in a matured self-consciousness of each, and a new sense by each of its place in the Kingdom of God. Each must be itself, and its best self,

before they can truly co-operate. And each needs more room to be itself than is allowed by the present relation, in which each tree is lopsided by its proximity to the other. But some relation and connexion cannot be escaped, by the very unity of human personality and the solidary social soul. It cannot be escaped by any conception of social things which has outgrown crude individualism or early sectarianism. Any detachment of the Church from the State which duly regards human history, spiritual psychology, or social interaction can only mean a readjustment of their inevitable relation ; and it can only be such a passage from one historical phase of connexion to another as gives more scope to the exchange of the influences congenial to each. The end in view is a perfectly free and fertile connexion of two powers that cannot live apart.

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As soon as a religious community moves out of its small circle, as soon as it becomes more or less of a public and permanent institution with a life outlasting the procession through it of its individual members, it cannot avoid coming

into some relation with the law of the State in which it lives. It needs the State's leave to exist within it. That to begin with. If it endangered the life of the State it could not be allowed to exist. It must convince the State that it means it at least no harm, else it must expect to have to live but in catacombs. It was the recurrent suspicion of its being a rival state, under a rival king, that made the Roman Empire harry the early Church to the earth and its martyrs to the lions. But in due course the religious community acquires and claims so much permanent personality as entitles it to hold property and use it. Then another phase begins. The Church must then come to some definite understanding with the State which is the guardian of all property. It is chimerical to think that the State will ever surrender the last word in the matter of property. If ever it did, it would be at a period so remote that it is outside practical polities. And indeed it is beyond speculative philosophy, because so many other things would have changed by that time, even in religion itself, that we have not the data on which speculation could be built. Even granting that the State did not at first trouble about

any freedom of association which stopped short of practical anarchism, these associations in due course become institutions, powers, foundations, with a tradition, a genius, almost a personality, and certainly property of their own. And the property especially, being held in the security of an ordered society, must be held on conditions which the State not only cannot ignore but must in the long run determine. No Church in a civilized State can absolutely ignore the State in respect of its property. No right of property is absolute anywhere, or independent of the State as the guardian of the public weal and, incidentally, of the moral personality. For more and more in an ethical civilization the State's duty to the public weal involves a concern for the growth of moral manhood.

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It is desirable therefore that the Free Churches in particular should not exhaust their whole energy on the current platform aspect of the issue; but that they should reserve some of it to face the situation that will be created when the negative side of their victory has been won. They should settle down

occasionally to envisage the new relation that would then arise. It cannot be said that there is and will be no relation. Sheer neutrality is impossible. For the edifices of even the Free Churches are held on deeds whose last guardian is still the State. The Baptist and Congregational Churches in particular are supplied with a ministry gratuitously, by means of endowed colleges under private trusts, which these Churches have no power to control, and, perhaps therefore, little will to supplement. They have less power to control their own ministerial seminaries than the State has. Such facts should be kept in view when we discuss, or denounce, the pauperizing effect of endowments in religion. Is there no pauperizing effect on the living Church in having its chief asset, its ministry, supplied to it without any sacrifice from eleemosynary sources which are under State control? How many of the unsatisfactory features in single Churches are due to that demoralization? Much care in our way of putting the matter is prescribed when we remember that the ministry, as the determining factor of the Church, is made in its plastic years by endowments which are not only

not controlled by the Church but are controlled by the State. For these institutions have no official relation to the Baptist or the Congregational Union (which has no *locus standi* in their affairs) but are under the supervision of the Board of Education. Such considerations could be multiplied still farther from the number of trust deeds that govern our places of worship. The anomaly is glaring but there it is; the final interpreter of each one of these deeds, and especially of their theology, is not the Church that worships there but the State. And they suggest a good deal of meditation as to the actual meaning and purview of the separation of the Church from the State.

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Among the troublesome questions involved in the State's recognition of the freedom of all the Churches must be included also such as this. Even if the Church were allowed to hold its property with an exceptional discretion in the interpretation of its Trust Deeds and Articles of Association could it claim from the State such farther exemptions and privileges as now obtain—release of its ministers from juries, or (in Australia) from conscription, or the exception of its income from taxation? Is a Church a

charity in the law's eye ? These are examples which show, among many others, how impossible it is, even with Disestablishment, for the State and the Church to go each its own way in an absolute neutrality. It is not thinkable that the Church should at any time be muzzled, or its hands tied, in criticising the moral aspect of State action, of legislation. And is it possible on the other side that the State should resign all cognizance of the programmes and procedures of the Church as a property owner ? Some present forms of relation, however, we should be well rid of. With separation, understood as the dissolution of the present form of establishment, the State would gain more from the abolition of religious-political parties than it does from a connexion which foments them. They are the combinations which the politician is least qualified to understand, and which he feels to be most exasperating. And in democracies religiously free they do not exist.

Another example of the difficulties that might surprise us with Disestablishment is suggested by the platform plea that the Establishment of a Church which is only partially Protestantized puts such a premium on Catholic influences that we have in it practically a

State school for Rome. Is it certain that with Disestablishment the Romanizing influence in the country would be reduced ? Is Anglican Catholicism a feeder of Rome or an arresting reservoir ? If the Anglican Church were not Catholic in one of its types, and offered no home to the Catholic instinct and aspect of Christianity, would not much of that temper move in a stream to Rome ? Is Romanism but a manufactured article, to be stopped by breaking machinery ? Are we taking the battle with Rome seriously enough, with enough understanding, when we regard that Church as a political more than a spiritual power, and treat it with Orange passion instead of evangelical mind ? That was the error Bismarek made, and it is made by all minds of his type ; and with no better results. Is it nonsense to say that Anglican Catholicism has kept more out of Rome than it ever led into it ? Whatever be our criticism of High Anglicanism can we say, when we recognize its conciliar and not papist genius, that its establishment is a road to Rome kept in good paving by the State ? And would Romanizing influences be depressed by disestablishment as popularly understood ? In any conceivable Dis-

establishment we can hardly include the opening of the throne to a Roman Catholic. Would that prohibition be providing Rome with the advantage of an outstanding grievance, a civic disability, a persecution; with a minor form of the plea which it has worked to such effective purpose in connexion with "the prisoner of the Vatican," the martyr of the Italian Government? Would Rome not make good use of the contention that the establishment of religion had not ended, but that a new form of perpetuating the Establishment of Protestantism had come? I am only alluding to this as a sample of the problems that would exist after the programme of disestablishment is carried out; to indicate, also, that the idea of a free Church in a free State is not the simple thing it appears to simple minds, but goes to the very roots and fibres of social life and philosophy. I would therefore suggest, while there is yet comparative peace, such a study, discussion and appreciation by us of the profound issue as is alien to the platform with its too obvious arguments and its party motives, imputations and invectives. I would press such a fresh consideration as will be impossible once the question is cast into the electoral arena lighted

with party fires. The Free Church Council might do more to justify its existence by educating the opinion of its own constituents on the principles of a Free Church as something involved in its Gospel yet entwined in the history of the State. Such a body ought, amid all its evangelical or civic action, to provide for more talk than it does, of the illuminative and not simply the rousing kind, talk instructive rather than oratorical, and educative rather than impressionist, by speakers who do not mind boring their audience by their competency. We need more talk and not less, if it is duly fed at its source by the most adequate knowledge, and guided in its course by men who can protect it from capture by impatient activists or impressionists, sceptical of principle or ignorant of its subtlety. Everything is not so obvious as it is often made to appear, nor so simple that there is nothing left but wonder at those who see another side.

It might be added also that the question wears a different form in countries like Scotland where Erastianism has never been the principle of establishment; where there is a practical solidarity as well as good feeling between the Churches, and openness to each

other's ministrations and fellowships ; where also there has been no such variety of confessions, beliefs, and polities as we see in England. The ignoring of this difference, through lack of acquaintance with it, has often led English speakers in Scotland into public mistakes, as it leads Scottish speakers in England to underrate the difficulties of Free Churchmen beside a Catholicism with an aloofness, not to say arrogance, to the North quite strange. English Free Churchism cannot be simply dumped on Scotland.

I ought not, however, to make that allusion without adding that this exclusiveness is not in the South what it was. The tradition of it, I know, remains with the public long after the exercise of it has abated and a new earnestness has set in. On much of this change it is pathetic to read the verdict of 'too late'—too late at least to avert certain forms of judgment. That is what one sadly felt amid the passionate discussions on the Welsh Church, when it was urged, in all sincerity, that Anglicanism had undergone something like a conversion in its behaviour, and needed but time for this to have its effect. It need not be denied that this is more or less true. But it is belated. The case

had passed beyond repentance, as public issues often do—as Israel did; and the judgment had gone out so far as that particular question was concerned. But the field is open for the deprived Church to become more of a spiritual power than it has ever been. In England during the same period the Church has become a new creature since the fusion of the High Church Movement with the Broad, or rather the absorption of the second by the first. The combination of spiritual earnestness and insight with high learning is putting a new complexion on some of the most inflamed questions. They are newly handled both in diagnosis and treatment, in knowledge and temper. Both sides among us, Free Church and State Church, are equally devoted to worship and obey the will of a historic Christ. Both are alike set on realizing it. It is a question of determining what that will is. The old cocksureness vanishes and the difficulty is felt on both sides. Practically each seems to have been equally blessed by the Spirit. And the answer lies in history, in the history of Christ and of His Church, in a fresh study both of Bible and of Church. Hence I confess that my chief hope for the good understanding out of which any union

must grow is centred not so much upon either common sympathies or common work for the kingdom, but upon that consecrated scholarship which is devoted to facts and principles at the fountain head for the determination of what the King in his final and creative Act meant the kingdom to be. For union, with all it means for the Church's practical effect, is a matter of theology more than of what is usually understood as religion. It is theology that parts, and it is theology that must unite—theology in the spirit of religion, the theology of faith. It is a slow process, but it is thorough for those in both parties who come to it with the pure resolve to let neither property nor prerogative deflect the will of Christ, or qualify an absolute obedience to it, and to count all things but loss for the knowledge of His mind.

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The question of Church and State in popular discussion, however, being conducted largely by men of business rather than thought, is becoming a question of property more than of principle, of Disendowment more than Disestablishment ; which does something to account for the bitterness entering the issue.

In the matter of Disestablishment the battle is substantially over. The present Erastian form of Establishment at least cannot go on —by the challenge of the one side, and by the growing admissions of the other. The established Church, as it revives, must have an independence and autonomy incompatible with its present relations with the State. In Scotland that victory has been won since 1843, when the true genius of the Scottish Church, never Erastian, and pertinaciously autonomous, came to a final expression, revealing a deep unity of spiritual intention which makes the present *rapprochement* possible. Indeed the principle of the matter has become more and more recognized everywhere since the Church ceased to be regarded merely as the nation on its religious side. And the recognition grows not merely in polities but also in the established Church itself as it becomes more conscious of its spiritual dignity and its heavenly calling. In so far as it is a question of property rather than principle, of endowment rather than establishment, it is a legal, historical, and political question more than a spiritual ; and it is therefore much dependent on the intricacies of tithe records or other documentary research.

In the spiritual region the freedom of groups to meet and to combine for worship is quite secure. And the point of real difficulty when we come to legislation on property is how far such a combination as the Church is more than a group, more than a company whose tenure of property depends on a strictly forensic treatment of its creed as if it were but articles of association. Is a Church but such a company, tied to its doctrinal schedule without modifying power? Or is it to be recognised as endowed, as a living but corporate personality, with power at any point of its life to annul its previous dispositions, and even to amend its constitution? What is the position of the society known as the Church before the law of the State? This is a question which the Scottish judgment of 1904 in the House of Lords settled clearly, consistently with the tradition of the English Courts. The Churches are for the law but associations, to be held to the literal interpretation of their symbols or schedules as statutes *ex animo imponentis*. But the matter cannot possibly rest there. The effect of the judgment was so absurd that legislation *ad hoc* had at once to undo it. And as the question goes farther we must ask

if there is anything in the Church which the State could be persuaded to recognize as differentiating it from ordinary trusts ? Has it a corporate personality which they have not—not a corporate existence merely, but an organic and continuous and free moral life in the nature of a personality ? Must it be treated therefore quite differently from an articed association ? Can the State be made to appreciate in any form that which the Church calls its indwelling Holy Spirit as something quite unique, not of man's will, nor man's control, and existing in no other society in the world ? Can the State, can a mixed body like Parliament, be led to discern such a Spirit, in any form apart from theological pleas, and by a religious sensibility of its own ; and by consequence to allow in the Church a personality and an autonomy, permitted to no other corporation ? Or shall it continue to treat the Church as a joint stock company for scheduled religion ? Or, perhaps, is the exit by a middle way, which shall everywhere surmount the notion of mere combination as marking an age of individualism and rationalism now outgrown, and shall allow to all societies within the nation which have shown

themselves institutions outlasting the flux of their constituents a quasi-personality, with powers, extended or absolute, to modify their articles at discretion ?

We might call in aid here the great difference between dogmatic and dogma in the sense in which I have used the word. Dogmatic, the staple of creeds and confessions, does not make the Church. It is the Church's doctrine altered by the Church for this or that age, and it changes from age to age. But dogma does not change. It is not made by the Church, it makes it. It is the thing creative and constitutive for the Church. It is the Gospel in statement. Now if the State is required to deal with the Church as the incumbent of a dogmatic system it can hardly regard the system as anything but a set of articles of association proceeding from human exertion and compact. They can be changed on occasion, though the State may fairly require notice of the change in connexion with the property held on such a base, and reserve its right to consent or not. But if the Church face the State with a dogma, i.e. a Gospel changeless and creative for it, the State may well, in proportion as it is religious (and it cannot now be treated as non-religious), recognize

and salute such a body with such a source. And so long as the Church carries it on its front as in its heart the State may say it has here no freedom to give but only a higher freedom than its own to greet. And that is the drift of what I would farther expound.

§

It does not seem probable that the State will soon or easily be led to allow property to be at the absolute discretion of the Church, or any other society, whatever it may come to be. In the case of the individual of course the State proceeds on the supposition that the person who changes his will after any interval is the same person as made it. In such a case this is taken for granted, without the evidence being led. But in dealing with a corporation, as to which the idea of personality is vague or but in the making, the same hypothesis could hardly be expected. And the Law would properly reserve to itself a final right to examine the state of the society, in the light of its articles and the course of its history ; and the consequent right to interpret the articles in relation to the claim. The State must be the final interpreter of all

property deeds. Still it may improve in its willingness to accept the interpretation offered by a society which claims to be the sole expert, with something like personal continuity (for the Church the Holy Spirit) amid all growth and change. The modern and living stage of such a society might one day be granted a *locus standi* in court which at present is entirely disallowed. But, while hearing the Church, the State could not part with its jurisdiction off hand without setting up a State within the State. It could hardly allow Churches to be entirely outside of its final jurisdiction in respect of property and its tenure. The State must be its own interpreter, even in a matter of theology, in so far as it involved property. What it could do would be to take such pains as it has never done to know the theology of the case, by putting the decision on each occasion into the hands of men who not only know it but are really schooled in its special methods. Or it could give decisive weight to such assessors in its decision. But it remains the final arbiter, on any theory which forbids Church absolutism within its borders, were its arbitrament no more than a self-denying ordinance

recognizing the Church's intrinsic and aboriginal right. Of which more anon.¹

§

This is a situation which would remain after any practicable separation of Church and State. And the State would be asked in the long run if not to pass a judgment on certain articles, their meaning, and their flexibility, yet to make up its mind on a theory of the Church. It would have to say whether it recognized in the Church anything in the nature of corporate personality; something which made it as absolutely distinct from every other such association as a family is different from a club. The state, in any form of separation, would still be invited to pass such a theological judgment whenever the right of a Church to its property was challenged on the doctrinal grounds of its deed. It would never consent to be a mere registration bureau for decisions taken by a Church on a majority vote, or some other form of its indiscretion. It would never allow a Church to go off with an absolute liberty to do as it might please for the moment with

¹ See chap. VII, and Appendix I,

property it inherits. Some minimal but germinal statement of belief would be demanded in the first place. And in the second some proof would be asked that the representatives of the Church, and especially its minister, were duly qualified and appointed. This is a requirement which would compel the Churches to make the matter of ordination a more careful affair than is often the case ; and in so far it would bring great benefit to a lax Church. It would require the settlement of the ordination question by some Churches that do not now face the issue, and therefore do not realize themselves because they do not duly prize their ministry.

The question, therefore, on what principle the State will interpret when its oracles have been duly instructed, presses less at the present stage than the question about such instruction to it from the Church's part. What account does the Church give of itself to the world ? How far does it know and utter its own mind ? If the Church require the State (which is at present in possession) to treat it differently from a mere trust it should be able to tell the State what it really is which makes it different, and to convince the State

that it is such a different body. That is a root question which might justify the deflection of a good deal of our energy at present for its consideration and settlement. How far is the demand for the separation of Church and State based on any definite idea of what a Church is, as distinct from a religious group or fraternity? What is it in it that repels the intrusion and jurisdiction of the State? It cannot be mere religion, which often shows no such antipathy. In what consists its identity, continuity, and autonomy as a corporate personality, entitled still to hold and use what it had when its theology was very different, and when it fulfilled a different part in the nation's life? Vague and amateur answers about still cherishing "the Spirit of Christ" are useless here. They might serve for the internal affairs of a fraternity with a subjective tone, but the claim lodged is on behalf of something much more than a brotherhood, something with an objective note, and a moral continuity, and a place in history. No mere brotherhood can always remain such. Either it runs down into the sand when the enthusiasm of fraternity subsides, or it passes upward into something more than fraternity, something with the

differentia of a Church, with a creative principle in it, and a career expressing something like historic personality, round which property can gather, and from which positive action proceeds. If and when it does so emerge from a group or consensus of the like-minded, and when it claims to remain self-identical and effective and growing after all its first members have passed away, it must be able to show the Law (which is the last trustee of property, and must see that trustees do their duty) where the identity lies. It must prove itself somehow the corporate personality it claims to be if it claim property. How shall it thus prove itself a Foundation and not a mere sympathetic concourse? Religious bodies may, of course, organize themselves as they please. And they can develop what views seem to them good. But what polity with what views, may continue at law to use the material resources, fabrics, etc., involved? Could the law, for instance, be expected to allow these to be held by a society which from Trinitarian became Unitarian, or even Positivists, which from Episcopal became Congregationalist, or which turned from Presbyterianism to be an Ethical Society?

From within the Church we might, of course, say that we are prepared on the whole to trust the Church not to go to antichurch extremes; a few freakish cases need not count, nor arrest our large and absolute freedom. We may feel that we can trust the liberty, continuity, and identity of the Church to the Holy Spirit Who inhabits it. But how shall we convince the State to that effect? How shall we satisfy it on any ground which would not equally protect a trades union which became an anarchist society, or a railway company that became a missionary society, and which used all their resources for that purpose by a majority vote? Is a Church purely a voluntary association, a thing of the will, device, or sympathy of men for an ideal programme? Or is it a spiritual body, created and not constructed, the product chiefly of God's will and not man's compact, with a corporate reality at least equal to that of the State if less elaborate; tracing a continuity backward not only with its past self but with all its dead as well as its Head, and forward with generations of the unborn that subtly work already as a retroversion and a power in the re-born? Is it put together contractually

by the accession of members, or do these but enter on a body which descends out of heaven from God, and share that prime reality ? Is it a receptacle for Christ constructed by Christian men, or is it Christ's body growing, selecting, and organising men into His Spirit ? It may have both these aspects—the one Protestant, the other Catholic ; which predominates ? Which does more to make the Church the Church ? What is it that really differentiates a Church from a group of sympathetic collaborators ? Is it just a society devised for the promotion of goodness ? Or is it a real unity in the moral sense of a unity—a personality, a corporate personality ruled by an indwelling and unitary Will ? Is it a moral organism, continuous from generation to generation in spite of the metabolism of every cell of which it consists ? And is the *continuum* mere vitality as a force, or is it a positive and characteristic vitality as a principle, a power and a personal power ? What is it that is positive and characteristic in it ? What are its notes that we could state for the guidance of a court willing sympathetically to recognize any claim of continuous and identical life that we can make good ? What is the nature of the

Church's cohesion—contractual or corporate, a working agreement or a creative and organising principle ? Has it from God a real personality of the corporate kind, which the State must recognize and respect as it does personality in the individual ; or has it one only fictitious, and conferred by the State only for legal convenience ?

§

To take but one point only—the truth or doctrine the Church teaches. No Church can be defined without reference to doctrine, whether we think that the sole reference or not—just as I say the Churches cannot unite, and can but partially co-operate, without some understanding on that head. What determines a Church's doctrine ? In a disputed case what is to be offered to the bench as the truth for whose stable sake a flexible Church exists and prizes its flexibility ? Is it the common minimum in the opinions of all its members, the *caput mortuum* which divides them least ; or is it the opinions of the majority of them, or is it the average opinion as assessed—by whom ? Or is it, on the contrary, something positive and God-given, which both

creates opinion and also protects the Church from its opinion at any particular age or stage, from accidental and temporary majorities affected by an epidemic of *Zeitgeist*, as in the eighteenth century ? Is it something in the nature of a revelation, which is not only trusted to the Church but which brought and brings the Church into being in a continuous creation ? While these questions are answered but variously or uncertainly the State, the public, does not know the Church's mind, because the Church does not know its own. And therefore the State cannot deal with us when we plead the unique essence, life, and discretion of the Church against the pressure of ancient symbols or trust deeds. The State has no means of knowing whether at any point of its career the Church has not become a changeling, a being of another kind, and whether it has crossed the line which parts a Church from a conventicle or a sect.

So that some form of dogma seems inevitable not only from the instinct of the Church but from its inevitable relation to the State. In the old Chaleedonian days the latter was as potent as the former, and the stamp of the State was the final seal in making a dogma

out of a doctrine. And so in another way it must still be—disregarding for the moment the spiritual relations of dogma, and considering only its legal relation to the temporalities of the Church.

CHAPTER VI

CORPORATE PERSONALITY—RIGHTS INTRINSIC OR CONFERRED

§

HERE it may well be asked what is meant by such a phrase as I have used more than once—a ‘corporate personality,’ and by such a distinction as ‘rights intrinsic’ and not ‘conferred’?

It is at least the State’s recognition in the body concerned of a creative power and not merely a staying power, one that organizes itself and not merely accepts organization from without, and one that stands in its own right.

Here we may perhaps venture to turn aside for a little to examine foundations, and to use an illustration (which is in reality more than an illustration) drawn from modern psychology, and especially as it is represented by the great name of Wundt. The distinctive thing in a soul’s life is a principle of what is

called creative resultants, or creative syntheses. That is to say, each product, each soul, is more than a product—it is a producer in turn. It is more than the sum of the factors which shape it. It brings into the old stock a new shaping power. In the soul's life, whether individual or racial, there is a growth of energy, and not merely a constancy. At each stage there is increment. In each soul there is a fresh contribution to the stock of power. It is not a case of the conservation of energy, nor its transmutation, but of its increase. The soul is not simply a faggot of faculties, nor is it a mere focus of influences, a point where several streams meet and merge in a current of as many gallons as the streams held. It is not the dynamic resultant of much convergence. Far less is it simply the area on which our feelings, perceptions, notions, or volitions disport themselves by certain laws. But it has an active, *a law-giving* power, a valuing, selective, nay creative power, a power of growth and of mastery. A living soul is also a life-giving spirit. It has a self, and only so is it spiritual—as it is personal. It has therefore a life peculiar to itself and autonomous. It has a creative function, which

makes it a fresh contribution to the series at each point, a quite new departure, and which, therefore, places it outside the methods of physics, when we go to the heart of the matter. This is indeed one modern aspect of the same contention as appears in the old issue of the freedom of the will.¹

The analogy may be applied to the social soul, to the solidary mind, to society. Society also is much more than the sum of its units. Each age is more than a redistribution of the forces of its past. History never repeats itself. And here also we have more than an analogy with the previous application to the single soul. For society itself is composed of such souls, which find in it their higher unity. They find themselves in it, personality being super-individual. But it is a unity which, if it limit the individual, yet is the condition of his social life and freedom. It must have room and cheer for the spontaneity, the originality, the really constitutive element in each soul. If souls were but atomic products, and not contributory sources, they could

¹ Bergson continues the same 'romantic' note as Wundt in this respect. He finds a place in science for the creation of new values not involved in the old.

never form a society. They would form but a mosaic and not a tissue, a macadam and not an organism. A society could never be formed by a mere jigsaw coalescence of individuals, but only by the subsistence of super-individuals in a unity kindred but vaster; which reacting makes a fresh contribution even to the spontaneity of its constituent souls, and presents them with a fresh creation and not a mere result of their aggregation. No true society can be formed by simple addition. But each unit both gives in its social place a power peculiar to itself, and receives a power peculiar to the society—neither power, however, existing abstractly and apart. The soul is by its nature a member of a high spiritual unity with the like spiritual nature, i.e. with a nature personal, growing, and creative. If there is a spontaneous, creative, personal, and free element in the unity of a soul far more is it so with a society of souls. And not merely by their aggregation into a crowd. The mind of a crowd is lower than the minds of its units, but the mind of a society is higher. Twice one is more than two in that world. The society is more than its units united.

Coagulation is not organization, and many forces still do not make power. As the soul is not a mere meeting point of converging influences society is not a mere conglomerate of adjacent souls. When such souls combine they produce more than a combination. They produce in a society a living creature which has something in the nature of personality. It has something with a cognate yet superior kind of personality, such as theology speaks of in the personal Godhead's relation to its inner Trinity of persons. The credibility of that doctrine is likely to be favourably affected by the modern passage from the metaphysic of static substance to the metaphysic of social ethic, of personality, of spirits and their inter-penetration; and especially the metaphysic of growing personality enhanced by its congenial social medium, of the social spirit, the corporate personality.

One is not oblivious here of the individualist's challenge to the idea of a national personality (including a national conscience), nor of his repudiation of a national judgment unless it fell within the culprit generation. But he may be reminded that that is a range too brief for the fruition or nemesis of a great national

act. These great acts move in great orbits. And the powers that delay but forget not range more than a generation. Such a span does not give a great public act time to work out its social content of boon or bane. It is compatible only with a somewhat catastrophic notion of judgment as a direct and prompt penalty, as on the boys who break their necks birdnesting on Sunday. But the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and there is a solidary guilt. There is, moreover, the authority of Christ to consider, Who regarded His treatment by His nation as the crisis of centuries of such behaviour, and Who viewed the national doom as the judgment on a series of many generations, all marked by the growing obduracy which only some kind of a personality with a continuous conscience could acquire. “ Fill ye up the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. All these things shall come upon this generation ” (Matt. xxiii. 32).

No doubt the reality of such a social unity as personal is hard to grasp, because our empirical and common-sense idea of unity is falsely drawn from an atom of substance, a

singularity of incident, or the individual in the street, instead of from that vast subconsciousness of our indivisible moral personality which underlies our perception of the empirical unit and makes it possible. Far less also than they should be are our views formed from contemplating the behaviour of the moral universe on long tracts, and even on a cosmic scale. But such a large conception of personality should become easier as we leave that empirical, substantial, or atomic notion of unity or reality, and find it in action—as we find the fundamental unity to be that unitary and eternal Act of God which is the universe itself—*die Welt als That*.

§

The conception of soul which I have been using is not the result of a priori theories. It is not a metaphysic imported into psychology. It is the fruit of observation and thought on the phenomena of the soul—in the modern way. And so the notion of such a society, corporately personal, as we find in the Church does not rest upon theological theories simply, however true, but upon history, on the behaviour and the experience of such bodies in history,

on their growing moral power and their tough resistance to extinction. They have a native recalcitrance to any such denial of their rights by man as would reduce these to a gift *ab extra* instead of a recognition *ad intra*. Right is proportional to personality. If the Church has not a corporate personality then its rights within the State are conferred instead of recognized. They are *conferred* by the State, and are a fiction for legal purposes instead of being *recognized* by the State as gift and moral prerogative from God. And that vas-salage is a situation which no Church could accept and remain a Church of grace, of the Holy Ghost and the new creation. If the personality of such a society is merely artificial, a fiction convenient for legal use, a status conferred by the State to help business, and if it is not intrinsic to the Church by its origin at a sourcee above all the world ; if it is not real but only contractual ; if the State can by its Absolutism create a right which in verity is not ; if in such a society as the Church there is really nothing beyond what the addition of its units can give ; if there is no autonomous supernatural life in which these units themselves have their life and right as

Christians ; in a word, if there be no Holy Ghost, —then the Church is quite at the mercy of the State. The abeyance of the Free Church issue at present is far from unconnected with the amorphous notions of the Church itself about its Holy Spirit.

Certainly individualism provides no ground for its freedom and autonomy. A purely individualist view of the Church as a covenanting group that meets to protect and fortify each member in the enjoyment of his own peculiarity within a State which has nothing to do with religion—such a view is no ground whatever for the Church's autonomy in the State. Such a Church offers nothing intrinsic to itself, no power or right that the State can be asked to recognize and even greet ; but it only seeks something, some freedom of association or tenure, which the State can confer as a franchise.

The concession theory of corporate life, which is the theory under which we live at present, reduces even toleration to a form of Establishment. It *is* concession and not recognition. Our freedom in society is a mere franchise, “a portion of the State’s power in the hand of a subject.” If the Churches are but religious associations they exist by suffer-

ance, by a right whose source is in the State. And the State which confers that right has the right to withdraw it. The State is not made to feel itself facing in the Church a right, like parentage, which it can regulate but not create. It does not recognize, it bestows. It treats the Churches as trusts and not as real corporations. It does not recognize in them the group person or the group will, allowing not a fellowship-right but only a licence. But it is on the line of recognition by the State of something intrinsic, and not of concession from it, that the freedom of the Church must be sought. It must be sought in the conception of the Church, of each Church, as more than a company, as a group-person. For real rights reside only in some form of personality. A person is the only subject of rights. And the State, which certainly believes in its own personality, will not recognize rights until it is convinced of the personality of the claimant. The less personal, therefore, our conception of Church bodies, the more attenuated their life or teaching is, the less right can they claim against the State.

In any case the State cannot be irrelevant

or neutral. It must have its word in the regulation of our practical attitude to our articles wherever property is involved. And there it may either confer a certain liberty, which we shall then owe to it; or recognize a liberty not owed to it at all but intrinsic to our being, and one which is only the Church's right because the Church is a personality and not a mere company. This personality of being is not conferred at the State's good pleasure. Even a State cannot create a person, "which grows up as a unity of life and action in bodies of people united for a permanent end," in this case united for the supreme end in the world. In the Church's case it flows from the Church's direct origin in a new creation, and from the creative immanence in the Church of a personal Holy Spirit Who is its perpetual providence. It is not conferred at the State's good pleasure, it is inherent in the life of the society as such. It is a divine gift, more surely than the State is.

The State is not the source of all right in other societies to exist. That were State absolutism of the most dangerous kind. It can but practically recognize and respect the real right, which descends straight out of

heaven from God, and which belongs to a personality, collective or simple.

§

The matter of Toleration was referred to a moment ago. It is worth while here to look closer and clearer into its nature. The Free Churches have risen, it is said, from toleration by the State, and they cannot be content till they reach the religious equality of all Churches before it. But that is no point of real arrival. We cannot stop there—at least till we are clearer in our minds than many are what equality inwardly means. Does religious equality before the State mean that all the Churches should have the like liberty *conferred on them by the State?* Are all Churches to exist levelled down to a status of conferment, or levelled up to a status of recognition? But how can any State confer what it has not to give? No Church's right is at any time in possession of the State, and how can it be received from it? What then would an Act of Disestablishment do? What would it confer on the Churches? It could confer nothing without establishing them in the act and making them owe their existence in society to the State. If the State confer

anything on a Church it establishes it in so far. If it confer liberty it establishes that liberty. And that is not religious liberty. Religious liberty is not held by the Church in fee from the State. No act of Parliament could give it. It belongs to the Church by its own nature, in its own right, as a feature of its own personality, in such a way that if the State do not recognize it, and if it claim to give it, the State is in collision with the Kingdom of God and its moral nature. All that the State can do is to recognize the innate right of the Churches, and get out of the way, owning that this is a region where it can confer nothing, which it cannot delimit, and which it should not enter, except at the invitation of the Church itself, to settle questions (like those of property) where the Church may call in the law as a technical help. The State can only recognize the right and liberty inherent in a Church with an intrinsic and continuous personality, with rights real and not fictitious, congenital and not conferred by any Charter as in a university.

§

Recognition of course is not here meant in its vulgar sense as patronage. It is not a case of the State honouring with its presence or privilege the occasions of the Church, or inviting its prelates to its functions or its feasts. It is not a question of formal recognition but real, the kind of recognition of religion that only a religious soul can give. The personality of the State, being not without religion, recognizes religiously the personality of the Church; and the more religious the nation is the more will its organ the State greet the Church and its freedom. The State should not be irreligious. It is too great, and divine, and moral to be purely secular. Citizenship taken seriously is a religious function. And the great occasions like a Coronation or a Royal Funeral would be almost meaningless without some confession by the State of a religion which would solemnize its king's fealty to the King of kings. It is not enough here to speak of the general religion of the nation, and to say that it could be duly expressed by simultaneous but sporadic and optional gatherings in each several Church

or Chapel throughout the land. That no doubt would be impressive in a way. But it would be incongruous and impossible to have such several and casual functions in connexion with the head of the State while the representatives, officers, and organs of the State as such did not own the occasion in any religious way at all. It would be a maimed, truncated, macerated rite. The State, however neutral to the Churches, could not be so neutral as that. And its recourse to the Church would not be patronage, but self-relief and self-expression in a confession which the Church alone could lead.

But recognition means much more than ceremonial occasions can cover. It is too respectful for patronage. It is the State's confession that it can as little intrude in religion as dispense with it, that though the Church may be its vicar it can never be its vassal. It means the recognition of the Church's autonomous life as a Church, of its innate and un-derived right, and of its house as its castle. Short of such recognition even toleration I have said is a form of patronage. It is a mode of establishment.

This is not so paradoxical as it seems.

Unless tolerance be understood as recognition of an inherent right (and it was not so understood when first granted), if it be regarded as a freedom which the State bestows and does not salute, it is still a way of establishing the Church. It is an expression of State absolutism, of the State as the source of all rights. The State theory, then and now, has been that no local liberty can exist except its authority to enjoy it is delegated by the State. Every right of the kind is a creation of the Sovereign. And such at present is the State's interpretation of the liberty to combine for worship and its kindred purposes. But such toleration is so far a creature of the State. The Churches are not regarded as bodies with an intrinsic and autonomous life, entitled in their own corporate right to perform acts of personal freedom, outgrowing their first conditions, and controlling their own affairs with a traditional discretion. The great Scottish case showed that finally ; but it only expressed notably what has consistently been the law in minor decisions all along. It was so with the Huddersfield case in the early eighties. To the paganism of the law the Churches, in regard to property, are simply joint stock companies with articles of association, which

are fixed in the doctrinal schedule of their Confession till Parliament allow their alteration, and which guillotine liberty as soon as it puts its head far enough out. The actual rights of the Churches to exist with such freedom as they have in society owes its sanction and origin to the Sovereign State. And what the State has to face is the growth in all the truest Churches of the sense that they are here beyond its jurisdiction, that they have a corporate personality and an autonomous life with aboriginal right, and that they are not simply faggoted together to such unity as they have by their first articles of association. To own respectfully that personality, and its appropriate freedom as existing in a Church, is the religious recognition of religion by the State. It is the salute of one corporate personality by another. It is the courtesy of moral peers. Thus religious liberty is not so much a right of the individual as of such a Church. Liberty belongs to personality, and to a Church as a great collective person wherein each single person finds himself.

Such a notion of the Church is in many free Churches but in the growth. There are, in the more loosely organized communities, many

Churches which have quite lost the sense of any such differentia as lifts a Church above a spiritual group, a company of the religious, or a philanthropic association with a religious complexion. And such groups cannot claim from the State the liberty which goes only with a personal nature. That notion of corporate personality with its implicates is a somewhat advanced and subtle one for the merely political or legal mind. And it is really the result for the Church of its faith in the Holy Spirit. It is Christ indwelling by His Spirit that gives the Church its unique moral personality. The notion is one that must be recovered where it is lost, and developed where it exists, as the only condition of ecclesiastical liberty, which is in the end the effective form of religious liberty. Those Churches will be at a disadvantage in the coming crises which cannot make it felt that they realize this unique corporate life. They must show that their polity and procedure have the power of producing or nourishing such life, and of safeguarding the beliefs which do. The right of any particular Church to exist is to be measured by the extent of its contribution to this autonomous personality of the Great Church. For

a Church to renounce such consciousness, belief, or loyalty is to make itself despised and merely tolerated by the State which it has to face as a feeble establishment. For, I repeat, mere toleration is but a grant of leave from the State to exist in the State. It is leave, it is not liberty. It is a conferred and established position. It owns the State absolutism and lives at its mercy. That is shown by the fact that the concession allows only for existence and not for growth. The law does not allow the body to outgrow the formal articles in which it was tolerated, nor to amend them by increasing light. It does not recognize the religion, the life, of such a body but only its existence. And the like applies to mere religious equality.

§

In discussing the subject in hand it is impossible for any one to avoid repeated reference to the decision of the House of Lords in the Scottish case. When the question becomes a burning and practical one it will be the leading case, discounted only by the fact that the situation revealed was felt to be so monstrous that legislation relieving the Church victimized was

at once undertaken.¹ This step seems to amount to a public confession of the absurdity, and the practical impossibility, of the legal theory of the subject. And no wonder. For it is the most conspicuous instance of the absolutism of the State to be found in the West outside France or Germany.² It is the long survival, in a particular instance, of the State paganism of Greece and Rome. It is the worst example of Byzantinism that our recent history has to show. And it is the parallel, at the other extreme, of the Absolutism of the Church which came to a head in the position given to the Pope in 1870. Unless, indeed, it may be said that, as that was really the victory of Curialism over Catholicism, of the political absolute over the spiritual, we have here not an opposite extreme but only another phase of the same political Absolutism capturing the Church and masquerading in spiritual guise. It is an extreme case of the divisive and deadly fallacy that one particular

¹ The relieving Act of 1905 is quite parallel to the Lyndhurst Act of 1844 following on the Lords' judgment in the Hewley case which treated the Unitarians as the Free Church of Scotland was treated in 1904,

² See Appendix II at the end of the book,

form of polity is essential to the life and exercise of Christianity—an extreme case of what appears in a milder form in the Anglican refusal to recognize any Church without a historic episcopate of which the New Testament knows nothing. In each case the spiritual power is the victim of the more pagan element and its despotism.

The treatment of the Church by the House of Lords in the Scottish case was so clamant both in its aspect and its results, that it shocked many into a new sense of this pagan absolutism claimed for the modern State, and of its erection of Cæsar over God. That is perhaps less surprising in an English court, in the law of a country like England, whose higher education at its two chief centres has come to be conducted on the higher pagan rather than the distinctly Christian lines, and knows heathen history, classics, and ethics better than Christian. And the result was the more monstrous that it was imposed on another nationality, whose education has gone on different lines, and whose Reformation seized on the moral evangel in Catholicism rather than its patriotic and aesthetic culture. It was an invasion of Scotland by English law quite

parallel with that treatment of Ireland which has brought us to the verge of civil war through the long ascendancy of religious insensibility.

But men's minds have been set moving in a new direction. The English treatment of the Church in Scotland as a mere trust or articled association was an intolerable indignity. It would have led to rebellion when Scotland was at the moral stage of Ulster. But it has stirred men up to ask how it can be prevented in the future; how, for instance, the Law could be prevented from robbing of their property (concerning which there is no doubt about its being private and non-national), those modernized Churches which hold it devised under ancient and specific Trust Deeds with elaborate doctrinal schedules now impossible. At present that robbery could be done by almost anybody with a *locus standi* who chose to set the law in motion—unless indeed advantage was taken of the Lyndhurst Act of 1844. But that seems only to provide for twenty-five years occupancy by another denomination, and not for a theological modernism which may but cover the ministry of a particular teacher.

There are two suggestions. The first is that

every group, commercial, cultured, or other, that has shown itself by a long and effective history to possess a common life independent of the coming and going of individuals should rank as a corporate personality, with innate revisory rights. But this is hardly practical politics. The State would never consent to relinquish its control over the national universities for instance. And it has not yet done with the City Guilds. So that the other course awaits us—of recognizing in the Church (through its indwelling Lord) a life quite unique, a collective personality more distinctive and divine than that of any other society (even the State itself), and a sanctity of inborn right more immune than theirs from the law's control, as owing nothing to the law's creation. Such a solution would be practical to the situation. And it would have the greater advantage of being a religious solution to a difficulty religious in its nature.

Only we are carried back then to what has already been said about the necessity to a Church of some distinctive dogma which states its source, nature, and purpose, and gives it its right to its name. If a Church claim from the State as a Church what the State does not at present

allow it—freedom to revise its constitution at its discretion in the future without going to Parliament ; if it claim power to revise the institutes of its founders solely by a decision of its members at any one future stage ; would this be understood to cover a resolution, carried with unanimity, under the influence, say, of a highly popular free-lance in its pulpit, to discard the name Church, to repudiate a historic Christ, to carry over the assets, and to reconstitute the Society as a merely religious or ethical group with nothing sure but the freedom to be unsure about everything in a religious spirit ? It is quite certain the State would not allow any such thing. Because, in the absence of any dogma to protect progress, the body concerned would in the case supposed no longer be held to be a Church ; and it would not show itself to possess the corporate personality which is distinctive of the Church, and which justifies its claim to the recognition of a Church's intrinsic right as it has been described.

§

We may here consent to be reminded that the Church, in one section or another of it,

has been, and must always be, directly or indirectly the mother of public freedom. Freedom *in* the State owes most to those who stood and stand for freedom *from* the State, to those religious bodies whose first concern is to obey God rather than man. It was so in the great Catholicism of the early middle ages. The Church, as the guardian of spiritual freedom, was the foster-mother of the nationalities. It was so also in our own national crisis which began with the Commonwealth and ended with the Revolution. The battle of English freedom was won in an ecclesiastical conflict, in which the spiritual Church defeated the institutional. It was a case of a free State in a free Church. And it must be so again when the present crude realism is overpast, when the eye for spiritual principles and issues has been reopened, and when the case for the soul has been taken from the advocacy of the cultures and restored to its only true champion and liberator, the Christian Church duly reformed by its gospel. The word reformed means when that Church has regained the certainty of its faith in the passion of a simpler, mightier gospel, more historie, more ethical, and yet more mystic; and when, on that base, it

has regained the only unity possible in a modern world—a federal unity, squeezing into isolation and starvation the monopolist apostles of a monarchical and episcopal unity intruded on the Gospel, and on a Church which was created by the Gospel alone, and is only by the Gospel kept.

§

If the Church be, instead of the creation of God in the Gospel, nothing more than a voluntary union devised by men to promote the Gospel, it has a poor claim to exemption from the law's treatment of every other such group—treatment as a mere association under definite articles, which cannot be modified without imperial consent. Yet the Church, I have contended, is more; what is that more? How shall we define what more it is to the State which we ask to recognize and respect it? Why is a Church not a mere association, a covenant of concurring men on conditions they lay down? Does agreement to form a Church make a Church, without delegation, consent, or authority from some Church existing with reproductive power? Has the Church such a power, subordinating mere compact, and in the nature of a continuous personality which is historic yet

identical, and which overrides mere voluntary associations or temporary decisions? It is not so easy as may seem to convey the difference, which for Christianity is so vital, between a Church and an association, or between a Church as created by God and the same Church as put together by man's volition.

But an analogy may be of use in setting out the Church's case. An old family acquires through its history a certain personality, which carries it far beyond the affection, consent, or purpose of the two people who founded it. That union of theirs is for the family far more than a mere memory or a mere point of origin. It starts a controlling tradition. And is this not due to the fact that they were but the vehicle of a greater unity than they realized, that, whether they knew it or not, their love inhered in a higher principle, that they were the organs of a love whose corporate scope far transcended their passion or the exercise of it. So, but more greatly, with the Church. This or that Church may be begun by the voluntary association of a few people in a covenant. But they did so unite in a Name in Whom the last is first, the end is the beginning, the final cause the creative

cause. The purpose they contemplated was really a providence that contemplated them and moved them. They were moved by a historic Gospel that had the creation of a Church always latent in it, and working in them though they were but on a desert island. Theirs was not a covenant for any earthly purpose, nor one merely devised by the mind of man, nor dependent finally on man's will. They did not create a Church, but so long as they held the New Testament Gospel, they only produced an instance of the Church, with all the virtue of the Church behind it, as the local court is really the presence of the sovereign state, however multiplied. It was not like the foundation of a society for some tentative object—to explore, to colonize, to manufacture. It was a covenant with God more than with each other. And it was to give effect to a finished work, it was not a mere enterprise, an attempt. It was to give effect by an ecclesiola to the Ecclesia. The local Church dispenses the Church universal. It was a covenant with each other only because in each soul it was first a covenant with a God whose gospel is so social that it cannot but create a Church. They were in a Christ Who is

inseparable from His people, therefore they were in a Church. What moved each was the experience or conviction of the Great Act of God working through them, an Act which had regard to the whole world, and which, by its very nature, was social, and creative of a society setting forth its eternal universal. It was this Act of God, foregone and finished, it was the vital principle and Holy Spirit of this Act, that underlay its empirical effect in their union by voluntary association. His will was in the makers' thought. And it was this Act of God, and their partnership of it, that brought the true nature of their voluntary act to light. His universal Act was pre-involved in theirs. And, as the Holy Spirit, it takes command of the consequences in the society thus composed. As in the old family the initial passion is mastered by a larger life of which the passion unconsciously witnessed, so with the Church. The spirit of a New Humanity takes command of individuals and their wills, and sets them down in companies on the face of the earth. And we together come to make up the full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, to the collective personality of a Church large enough to

be the *vis-à-vis*, and the bride, of such a universal person as Christ.

A Christian plea like this it should not be impossible to make intelligible to a religious State. If it did not share the experience it yet could not deny it as an experience. And it could not deny the reality behind the experience, except by passing a theological judgment of a negative kind from which as a State it would probably shrink. Nor could it long deny that it was dealing with no private corporation with whose inner life it had nothing to do. It would soon become aware that an inner life at once so ethical and social in its spirituality was probably the most powerful of all the influences on public life, and could contribute more than any other to the moral well-being of the nation. The relation would be that of one public corporation greeting and co-operating with the other and greater. It would not be the relation of a public corporation like the State to a corporation entirely private and irrelevant to public life. It does not follow that disestablishment must mean the reduction of the Church to a private corporation, such as one of its seminaries, for instance, might be at present.

CHAPTER VII

THE CORPORATE PERSONALITY OF THE CHURCH

IT cannot be too strongly urged that the spiritual condition of the Church's liberty in the State is this consciousness, not only of its spirituality (which is too often but an abstract, negative and ineffectual thing), but of its high, corporate, positive, dogmatic personality, as the subject of rights which an abstract spirituality cannot have.

When we speak of the corporate personality of the Church we must not be supposed to confuse that with its existence as one ecclesiastical corporation. The possibility of one such corporation for the world is gone for ever. Civilization becomes too vast and varied for any such organization. The Roman empire of the Church, represented by the Curia, has already begun its decline and fall, few as may be the outward signs of it. Modernism, though for the moment in abey-

ance, has already begun to break such bonds and cast away its cords. It represents the escape of a too great, and in a sense too spiritual, world from either its swaddling clothes or the cerements of death. It is what a Chinaman would understand by the abolition of foot-binding. The Church, must become instead of a world corporation, a federation of corporations each catholic in genius but none catholic in compass,¹ varying in origin and circumstance, but still knit in a spiritual unity as positive as the moral personality of a super-individual Christ. This is what is meant by the unity of the Spirit. It is more than a sympathetic unity or a contractual, more mystic and wonderful ; it is the unity of a corporate personality indwelling and creative ; a unity whose bond is not provided by organization but by an organizing life, by the only kind of life that organizes persons as such, by the distinctively Christian principle of the interpenetration of persons and their cohesion in a supreme personality—the principle of the Christian Triune God. The Church is

¹ Even the Anglican Church is an organization of independent Churches in the sense that each incumbent is a corporation sole in the eye of the law.

more than an organization ; it is an organism. But it is a moral organism (lest we be victims of biological metaphors), it is a group-person.

What is here said, then, is that the *development or the recovery by the Church of this faith in its spiritual and collective personality is the first condition and the only plea for demanding from such a moral personality as the State that respect which is its due recognition of the Church's unique life and liberty.* It is the loss of this sense, this self-consciousness, this self-respect, on the Church's part, especially in its looser and more individualist bodies, that has led to the reduction of its public influence. Moral influence has been exchanged for electoral. And the politicizing of the Church, the distrust and exchange of its native power for political methods, means the loss of its true influence on politics. The worship of Liberty does not bring Christ's liberty nor carry its stamp and power. It is easy to rouse audiences with excellent pleas about the Church's duty to secure righteousness in affairs, and to urge that that should be done by going out straight-way and organizing denominational crusades to that end, in which the preachers should lead

the van on penalty of being treated as barnacles on the ship of State. But the old crusades were mistakes and failures. And perhaps these modern campaigns were more effective twenty years ago than they are now, when experience has begun to show their weakness, and revealed the secret contempt for many of them even of the party that they propose to benefit. We must go much deeper than such methods if we are to secure for the Church a respect really valuable as an effective influence and moral guide on the State and its affairs. The popular form of the complaint against the politicizing of the Church is usually directed against the excessive participation of its ministers and assemblies in political, i.e. party, issues. But the evil is far deeper than that, and it infects more than that many of the critics themselves ; who are often more concerned about party interests of their own colour than about the spirituality of the Church.¹ The real politicizing of the

¹ What strikes one in most of their protests is rather a grudge that the opposite party should have such electioneering benefits than an intelligent passion for the unworldly nature and influence of the Church. Some of them in private life find no difficulty in adjusting the

Churches is the loss of the sense of their corporate reality and priority in comparison with that of the State. The Church is to many but a group, or a pious club, or brotherhood, while the State is a very great and present personality. They have far less sense of a corporate Church and its obligations than they have of a corporate State. Amid the many suggestions towards the unity of the Churches perhaps the most needful is that they should become **Churches** again before they can feel the Church's real bond. There is no danger to the Free Churches so great as their loss of the sense of that which makes the Church unique in the world, and the growth of the notion that they are no more than religious associations or fraternities. They sink into religious sand. There are very many people to whom the present relation of Church and State will always seem preferable to a change which should give a victory to bodies that are **Churches** only in name, and that are even irritated at being expected to be more. The loss of this Church sense is indeed the subtlest kind of Erastianism—when the sense of a body politic is more keen, dear, and effectual than spirituality of the Church to a very pushing, skilful, and successful career in an egoist world.

the sense of a body spiritual, when they have more sense of a constituency than a communion. Christian people, amid the new social ardour, tend to be more convinced about politics than about belief, about the ministry of the day than about the ministry of the Church, about their elections to parliament than about an election to life, which they dismiss as dogmatic tag and rag because they are more occupied as worldlings with their economists than as believers with their theologians. They call polities practical but theology academic, by an inversion of values which for a Church means the destruction of power. It is an entire inversion of the true order of interests—for a Church at least. For a Church its belief means much more to it than any amount of social reform it may promote. Its whole social contribution grows at root out of its belief—as modern society is due at last to Christian faith. Church unity, I keep urging, is a matter neither of common work nor of common sympathy, but of common belief. And the wise guardians, tillers, kindlers, and promoters of the Church's belief are more precious possessions than the tribunes of its millennium.

The belief (though not the dogmatics) is the foundation, fount, and norm of its energies as a Church in the service of the Kingdom of God ; whereof social reform or political progress are but means and parts. The belief which it is of first moment for a Church to cherish is the belief that makes it a Church. And the indifference to right belief is but one symptom among many of the loss or the tepidity in some bodies of that Church sense which is the ecclesiastical counterpart of personal self-respect. A Church of people who are more sensible of State affairs than of Church principles is without self-respect, and it hardly deserves Church liberty, as indeed it is little likely to get it. Any form of establishment would be preferable to that, if it showed itself compatible at all with a real sense of the spiritually corporate personality of the Church. A sure sign of the existence of that sense is the pursuit of Disestablishment, not chiefly as a measure of democratic equality, but as a necessity of the Church for its life in the Holy Ghost. The dealings of the State with the Church will always be most influenced at last by what the Church feels to be due to its self-respect as the body of Christ. Any claim we make

for freedom to determine our own affairs as Churches, and to define our own faith without being penalized in our property, must be founded on our overwhelming sense of the Church as having a life of its own, innate, positive and unique, quite different from the life of the State, with power to grow on its own principles, and dispose of its own assets. That is, it rests on our sense of the Church as a spiritual personality and a group-will of God.

The same applies to the nation. It also has a collective personality, a historic conscience, and a continuity of glory which fills it with hope and dignity, and of responsibility which connects crime and consequence, error and expiation, across centuries. The nation has a personality of its own, expressed in the State. And, as respect and freedom exist only between personalities, it is not surprising that the State, with a personality so vigorous and obvious, should pay little moral heed to groups that seem to have none. Yet for the State's own safety at last it must pay supreme heed to the principles of the Kingdom of God ; of which kingdom the Church is the supreme trustee. And the Church has to look for a heavy judgment if she ebb to

such a feeble personality that her word for the Kingdom is of no account wherever personality is strong.

There is another corollary to the corporate personality of the State. Personality and religion are inseparable. And a group, to the extent to which it is a personality, like the State, must have a religion, whether it express it by an established Church or otherwise, whether it keep a Church as a chaplain or sympathetically recognize the Churches as its more spiritual colleagues. Whatever be defective in the Christianity of this nation it is not likely, with its past history, to consent to have no national recognition of religion, either on great and solemn occasions, or by way of recognizing and saluting the Church's spirituality, and its claim for the autonomy of its distinctive life. And for the sake of the Church it is not to be desired that the State should discard all connexion with the nation's religion. The liberation of the Church from State patronage and control does not necessarily mean that. For the entire detachment of the Church from the national issues handled by the State robs the Church of a large utterance, discourages a large conception of things, pens it

up in a sect, abandons it to interests which for want of such a corrective too easily become subjective, conventicular, and trivial. It is apt to turn its assemblies into mass meetings of minor men and those who return them their own note. While such smallness of interest casts into public life many of the ministers whose moral and intellectual passion burns for larger and nobler things.

So that when the present establishment comes to an end it does not follow that the State could be entirely neutral to religion. The object of the Church is to make the nation religious, which could not but affect the nation's organ the State. And the more religious the State becomes the more it will wish to establish religion in the public heart, life, and respect. Our care must then be to see that the inevitable readjustment is of the right form, the form that befits the Church's spiritual dignity and autonomy. If the State cannot be neutral and ignore the Church's existence it can be reverent and recognize its personality, by standing far enough away to give room and invitation to the spiritual to live its own powerful life. Permission is here absurd.

§

We have seen that in the last resort the State must adjudicate on property, and in so doing it must express a theological judgment (for which only the Church is really competent) on the theological conditions to which property may be tied, and on the Church's congruity with them. The solution in such a case would be probably a practical one, State in form but Church in effect. The judge would accept any account of the theological situation which was competently and responsibly given by the Church concerned, or the Churches of that order. The difficulty would then chiefly be with those more granular denominations whose liberty consists in having as many beliefs as heads, who have no symbol of belief, and who yet have no central body to define the average belief for the instruction of the Court.¹

But in other respects also it would be impossible for the State to avoid some definite and overt attitude to religion, which would mean of course a demeanour towards the Churches. Its practical recognition of the unique life and liberty of the Churches, as distinct say from the universities, the recognition

¹ See note at the end of the book.

that, while it can bestow on the universities a charter, the Church comes to it with a supernatural charter in its Gospel—such a recognition is itself a positive attitude to religion, and a specific treatment with due respect. To the Church the State can be neither supreme, servile, nor neutral. It cannot avoid a relation which is active and practical, however unobtrusive. It could not ignore religion as such, nor treat the Churches just as if they were benevolent societies. It must take up some position to the Church's peculiar and unique claim, a position, therefore, which is itself peculiar and unique, and is not the same as its attitude to any other society in its midst. It is most parallel to the State's respectful treatment of the family hearth.

The form of understanding and recognition between Church and State which may follow on the inevitable liberation from the present Erastianism it is hard to predict ; indeed for the moment it is impossible. We can only be sure negatively that under modern conditions both of society and of religion sheer neutrality is impossible. And we may go a step farther and say that the form of relation must have regard to historic circum-

stances and the tradition of a long past in which the connexion has been very close. It is a misfortune both in civil and canon law when old questions are discussed as abstract idealisms, in a Benthamite way, without any historic sense. And it is one of the unhappy results of the quarrel between Church and State that it has tended to leave the one side as devoid of that sense as the other at its mercy. The old and institutional Churches have quenched the Spirit too much by canonical order and tradition; while the protesting Churches, as Churches of the Spirit, have paid so little regard to what the Spirit says in the Church's history as often to parade their contempt and defiance of His traditional continuity—ending in a democratic atrophy of historic reverence or even conscience. But we may be sure that when the question of disestablishment in England becomes practical this historic sense will play a great part in the settlement. And this not merely as a lawyer's sense of precedent, but as the spiritual historian's sense of the place of continuity in a historic religion, or in the faith of Churches which have been promised that they should never be entirely forsaken by the Holy Spirit.

§

Especially will this historic sense note that the question in England and in Scotland is in one vital respect quite different from its aspect in either Ireland or Wales. In both these cases the plea has been that the disestablished Church was an alien Church, that it was thrust on the national history in the past, and is out of tune with the national spirit in the present. But that plea cannot be set up in connexion with the Established Church in either Scotland or England. In England indeed the plea might even be that the national Church has been, and is, too much in tune with the national temperament to be in line with the purpose of a Christian Church. But at least it is not an alien Church. And the precedents drawn from disestablishment in either Wales or Ireland must be applied with very great caution, and with a due regard to the way in which the establishment has entered into the moral tissue of the English people, and especially of its imperial half. I am not saying for the moment how far this has been helpful or harmful to either Church or State. Nor am I blind to the inweaving of the Free Churches, some of them for centuries, with the life tissue

of the nation's other half, and with the political salvation of the whole. But that other and democratic half has had more effect on the political than the social life of the nation so far. And even in our political life it has affected legislation more than administration, parliament more than the services.

That, however, is a point I do not wish to discuss in detail. All I want to indicate here is the deeply intimate part the Established Church has played as a matter of fact in the shaping of our national character and religious tradition. Apart from the moral impossibility of neutrality it is not always safe to treat the movement of public affairs on the lines of mere process, nor to feel that we have only to go on widening the range of particular precedents without any change of type. To cut all connexion between State and Church in such circumstances would be a step so catastrophic in its nature and so violent to historic continuity that it might well bring us nearer civil war, and a religious civil war, than anything else whatever could. If civil war can in this country only take place on a religious issue nothing is more likely to lead to real civil war than the handling of this issue before the public has been

educated in its principles. And the issue must naturally be more an issue of principles than in either Ireland or Wales. Nothing is more dangerous to the democracy than its impatience, unbalanced (if also unhampered) by historic regards. And in the religious region, which is the region of the most valuable conservatism in human nature, this hurry is a double and triple danger. Here if anywhere time should be given for educational effect, and for the appreciation of forces which are prime in their effect, if they are the last to be gauged and got home to the mass. We might be content to take the victory of our principle in slow instalments. Even those who believe in neutrality might be content to reach it at two leaps instead of one ; and, when they have reached real, equal, and practical recognition for the Churches, they might tarry there while they converted society to their final ideal—if neutrality then remain their ideal. We might be willing to wait and persuade all, rather than coerce in the name of religion a minority passionate upon one of those great interests of the soul which make life and order seem cheap.

But it is a region also where brothers are engaging. It is one where a higher virtue

than patience comes into play. Is there no more room and call here for love than we mostly allow in the coarser public issues and methods? Our chief adversary is not a party in the State, except incidentally. It is a great and glorious branch of the Church of Christ, whose bond and spell we cannot but feel in proportion as we are Churches ourselves, compelled to take another line.

§

And this leads me farther to say that the recognition which the Church by its nature demands is an *equality* of recognition. No Church can desire for itself what it does not equally claim for every Church. The various Churches might on a particular occasion agree to be prominently represented by some one Church as the *doyen* of the rest, but it would be a matter of courtesy, consent, and mandate, it could be none of prerogative. And if it be necessary, as I have said it is, that, for the success of disestablishment, the Churches that tend to sink into mere religious clubs or brotherhoods should recover the Church sense so far as to make their unity a unity of *Churches*, it is equally necessary that those sections

which claim high and exclusive prerogative, unchurching all the rest, should learn their schismatic place and bate their overweening claim.

§

The case I put, therefore, is something like this. The absolute neutrality of Church and State is morally and spiritually impossible. It is especially and historically impossible in a country with a history like England. Yet freedom there must be, and therefore the present relation must sooner or later end. But when freedom does so arrive it must not, cannot, be a conferred freedom. For then we should owe it to the State, which we should confess in accepting it to be sovereign. And such Gallic absolutism in the State be far from us ! But it must be a recognized freedom, an inherent right which the State does not give but greets practically. It must be the recognition of a corporate personality in the Church, whose right is conferred only by the same Creator as is the Giver also of such right as the State has on its own plane. But it is impossible to press on the State the demand for its recognition of our freedom to manage our own affairs or beliefs

until we can convince it that we are Churches, that we are group-members of that great Federation which is now the only possible form in which the Church can be universal. We must make real a unity among ourselves which is truly a unity of *Churches* and not merely of curdled spirituality. We cannot expect to carry our point, and we hardly deserve to do so, till we show that we are united, not in a temporary and occasional way round a political measure or a humane sympathy, an instinct of freedom, or even a spiritual ideal, but far more positively as Churches of the Gospel which searches and serves the world in its last and worst crisis, the moral crisis of its guilt. We must consolidate and enrich the Church sense, and we must distrust any impoverishment of it which reduces our Christian communities to philanthropic institutes, social centres, or pious groups. We must be able to tell the State that we are true Churches, and to prove it by our style and principle as well as by our work. We must have a belief, and not merely freedom to form various beliefs—a belief which at once endows us with that freedom and rules it. We do not exist for freedom to find truth; that is the liberty of science

which is but tentative. We exist for the freedom of a truth we have already found, and which began by finding us.

A facile and religious writer, whose pen gave him a vogue with those sections of the Christian public that court the world as liberal, wrote on Church unity in a current print which I took up while I rested my pen. He began by the easy assumption that the law of the Church is but Nature spiritualized and glorified—natural law raised to the power of the spiritual world. He told Christendom in his journal that the absolute freedom of the mind is the one condition of the discovery of truth. (Some have been trained to hold that a severe discipline of the mind is a more essential condition still.) And in the use of that freedom, he said, we are finding out where the one unity lies. It is in the growing harmony between one truth and another. It is rational harmony. We cannot be quite free till such a synthesis is finally won. He transfers this alien notion from a rational philosophy to the Church, as if Christianity were one by its success in articulating religious truth. “This is where science and religion are meeting. It is a unity better and deeper

than anything our Church conferences can devise." As if Church conferences or rational systems could ever devise for the Church the unity which can only be created by its Gospel. How pertinacious is the orthodoxist afterwash—the notion that faith rests finally on any truth or synthesis of truths. It takes a sound education to get rid of that notional religion. A nodding acquaintance with theology at the outset of life, supplemented by popular reading and no study, provides no fundamental escape from the old taint, and it may leave a man the victim of such ready reckoning all his days.

We must rise above dainty fustian of this pseudo-liberal kind. We must buckle down to the moral facts, the positive forces, the actual situation, under competent guidance. For our purpose, and for the sake of our freedom, we must rest on the Act and Gift of God once for all as the thing which carries and binds us all. This we must state as the experience of a Church and so bring to the world that achieved freedom for whose service and in whose foregone power we claim to be publicly free. We can never win freedom in this social region but by a soul freedom with

which we begin as a divine gift and which makes us freer than any State or science can be. We must be able to state positively what we ask the public to recognize as the ground of our inherent right and the obligation of our independence. We could expect no recognition of a negative thing like unchartered freedom, or an encyclopædic thing like a harmony of all truths, which we can never be sure of reaching and which leaves us at best with an asymptotic faith instead of an absolute. We ought to be able to present in brief the seminal inexhaustible substance of our message, the dynamic ground of our claim, and the foregone goal of our aim. For State purposes no less than for Church footing we should have a common dogma, germinal of a various theology, the guardian of its freedom, and the condition of a united Church. Nor should we only be able to offer a belief. It must be a belief inseparable from a new life, the expression on its face, a belief both creating and uttering a corporate life, and acting through it as a power. The differentia of a Church is a life—not in the sense of a mere intense vitality, nor of an ethical conduct or carriage, but in the

sense of an indwelling norm and Spirit and Lord in action. We must so carry ourselves, and especially carry ourselves together, that even the State may know that a power is with us in the night, that we have that new creation which it would make the world a blessed world to have, that the Church is the habitation of the Spirit and the tenement of the fulness of the New Humanity in Jesus Christ.

Church unity is the condition of Church freedom in the State. And Church unity means the existence and rule in each Church of the real Church sense. And that is impossible without a positive belief which we must confess, and a supernatural life therein which we cannot but show.

CHAPTER VIII

CHURCH AND STATE AS PUBLIC CORPORATIONS. THEIR DIFFERENCE

WHATEVER power the Church has, and whatever right, belongs to itself as a spiritually corporate body, whether its organization be loose or close. It is not a franchise. It is not a portion of civil liberty. It is not conferred by the State, nor by society in any form. The Church is not a member of the State in any such sense as a municipality is. It is a corporation with no such dependence on the State. In so far as the Church is an institution at all it is an institution for salvation ; and the State is nothing of the kind. Each has a problem and a work of its own. The Church especially has its own problems, which are not those of the State, great as its service to the State must be ; it is there for its own sake. As the dawn and youth of the Kingdom of God it is an end in itself, it is not a mere means. And there is only as much in common between

them as should enable the State to recognize how much more the Church is. The existence of the Church, its right to exist, does not flow from the State. It is a corporation with a right parallel to the State's right ; it is not derived from it, it descends on it. Their powers are different. The State has no *jus in sacra* ; it has a *jus circa sacra*. It must secure the Church in the holding of its property according to the Church's own principles, and especially according to their living and growing power, according to the Church's own statement from time to time of whatever it calls its dogma. But it has no *jus in sacra*. It has no power for instance to compel the Church to receive any citizen as member. The Church has the absolute control of its own membership, and it must be secured in the freedom of admitting or repelling whom it will in connexion with its sacraments. No State can empower or impair the Church in such a right or freedom. Nor can the State prescribe a polity to the Church. It may not say that the only Church it recognizes shall be either episcopal or congregational. That is a matter for the Church alone according to the organizing genius of its Gospel in given his-

torical circumstances. The power of the Church is given by what created the Church. It is bound up with its existence. It is the power and right of a spiritual corporation with an autonomous existence. No official of the State is by that fact an official of the Church. No king can be its head. Nor can an official of the Church be *ipso facto* an official of the State. A bishop is not a prince, nor a chancellor. Nor is a pope an emperor. The State has no more right to rule the Church than the Church has to rule the State. Erastianism and Romanism are alike false. Self-government is a right as inalienable from the Church as from the State. It is in the nature of each, according to its peculiar principles.

§

The Church, moreover, is a public corporation. Its object and trust is of no private interpretation. It is a public and social issue it has in charge. Its problems and tasks are those of Humanity, of the New Humanity. Its genius is international because it is supernational. It is corporate in and for a universal salvation. It rides the blasts of a European conflagration. It is the supreme

mandatory of God's will for the race. It is concerned with a public, universal law, the moral law of holiness, with man's relation to a holy God. It preaches love's atonement to that law, and a redemption thereon. Its goal is God's one comprehensive purpose with the world—forgiveness and regeneration. Its task is the supreme goal of the race and its history—the perfecting of Humanity to the image of God. In this respect its function is parallel with the State's, though on a far higher plane. Both are divine agents for human perfection. But the one by way of law and its evolution, the other by way of conscience and its redemption. The State does not exist to make men good, the Church does. The State exists to secure the conditions of goodness, the Church to create the thing itself, which is a practical and conscious communion with God. The State is an agent of the Kingdom of God, the Church is the Kingdom of God in the making. But as both are involved in that service their total separation and neutrality are impossible. If the Church is interdenominational, the State is interconfessional in its own way. The one serves the kingdom indirectly, the other directly; but

the two departments cannot just work past each other. Such an idea represents a crude stage of conception, familiar with neither history nor society, with neither the genius of revelation nor the psychology of the soul. Each is ethically necessary ; but we cannot continue always to have a double ethic. There cannot be finally two ethics (though there might be two stages of ethic) in the conscience of one Humanity. And ethically the Church is at least no less autonomous than the State. We could go on to say, were it relevant, that the Church has the ethic of Humanity and the future, to which the ethic of the State is but a stage.

§

There is another vital distinction between the Church and the State which affects the mode of their relation. While both have a trust from the past, the Church is in charge of a historic revelation, positive and changeless, the State is not ; it has but a tradition quite mutable. The Church founds on an act which in principle is finished, the State rests on no such finality, but is in a perpetual process of evolution. The one rests on an act common to mankind, the other on a tradi-

tion varying for each people. The Church farther rests on a new creative act in history, and one perpetually creative, evolving on the new plane of its creation by the Gospel at the first ; the State rests on no such new departure, no such Gospel, but on a past more or less idealized, or on an ideal more or less vague in the future, and never absolutely certain—promised indeed by much, but absolutely guaranteed by nothing corresponding to the sure destiny of the Church. So the Church stands on eternal certainty, the State on public security. If in the Church the element of security take the upper hand of certainty, as it does in Rome, it is so much the less a Church, and so much more a State. The Church is always living and growing on a certainty infinitely germinal, the State is always experimenting towards an ideal infinitely attractive. The Church has an eternity within it, the State has but a millennium before it. The one has a faith, the other a dream. The Church has the power where the State has but a presentiment ; the one has a sure salvation, the other a vast surmise. The one has a charter of grace, the other but a tenure in law. The one is positive for the soul eternally, the other

is positive but in its prescription for the time. There is that in the Church which cannot be superseded, there is in the State nothing that cannot be superseded. Every enactment of the State may in course become obsolete ; but the dogma, the possession, the fact which makes the Church, can never be obsolete. The Church, therefore, comes nearer to that deep region where Humanity is most enduring, most conservative, and most itself, which no age can wither nor custom stale ; the State works rather in the region of perpetual change, which becomes anarchy without the foundation the Church must give. The one is deep, the other is wide. In a Church we rest and renew, in a State we move and tire.

The point is misapprehended when it is said that the Church is under trust to the State for Christ. Rather it is under trust to Christ for the nation, in the interest of a supernational kingdom. The trusteeship under the State is the thing which the principle of spiritual autonomy protests against everywhere, whether in Romanism or in our Free Churches. Spiritual autonomy is a first condition of trusteeship to Christ. No trusteeship to the State can destroy by legal control the

right of the Church to delimit its own communion and regulate its own roll.

The Church, therefore, has for its spiritual charge something morally intelligible, briefly stateable yet infinitely potential, the teeming principle of identity and continuity for human progress—steadfast, immovable, ever abounding in the work of the Lord. It has that which keeps progress human by keeping it divine. It anchors change on the Immutable. Its principle of Time is a revealed Eternity. If the State's ideal is progress, the Church's is Eternity. And for Humanity Eternity is of more moment than progress, the Church than the State. If we have to do with progress much we have to do with Eternity more. For Eternity, as God has revealed it to His Church, carries with it progress, but progress as it is pursued in the State does not carry with it Eternity. Without the eternal creative and reconciling resources of the Church's revelation the State carries with it, in the tension of mere progress, its own disintegration. The pace kills unless we are established in grace. And we die of growth, our strength weakens us, unless we rest in the Lord.

§

It is with this dogma, this creative *Kerygma*, this message and sacrament of endless life, and this gift of staying power that the Church approaches the State (giving it more than it can ever receive from it), and asks that the divinity of this gift and function be recognized as the royal thing for social life. *Incedit regina.* It does not ask the State to pronounce on its dogma, whose conviction grows only out of its own unique life. But it does expect all due room, not to say facility, for the newly born to live. And it credits the State with so much of the vision and faculty divine as to see and own that the God who is over the State is within the Gospel. It does not even pursue the conversion of the State, if it can but elicit the recognition that a greater than Moses is here, a greater than all statemakers or statesmen. Those who are as yet dull to the principles of the Kingdom may still own the majesty of the King.

The State faces the Church with no such message, no such finality, as that with which the Church faces the State. And it is not the amulet of the Church's fortune but the secret of the Church's life. It is a message which

is in the Church's mouth only because it is in its heart. It *is* its life. What the Church gives in its gospel is its life for the world. There is no such gift, and no such principle, in the State. Its law is the law of order and progress, step by step in time ; it is not the law of life and power in Christ, which has the secret, the possession and the reversion of Eternity. Our indifference to such vast certainty is part of the secularization of the Church, its capture by the mere social ideal, the subtle Erastianizing of much religious liberty, and the enslavement of Churches that believe themselves specially in charge of freedom. It is a dogmatic differentia that marks the Church, and it may be stated variously ; but some statement of it is essential to the Church's life in history. The State must come to recognize it as God's will for the Church, however it might shirk its direct obligation on itself. The State in any land where the Church is a power has to do with the Church's dogma, in the way of recognizing it for the Church, if not in the way of confessing it for itself. It must recognize the Church's native right to state its own dogma and make its own doctrine from time to time unpenalized ; it is

not asked, nor is it able, to utter it as its own. And the Church on its part must be prepared with some statement of its Gospel and its object, whose terms at least shall be intelligible to a State that can acknowledge if it cannot assess its value. Until the Churches can federate on some such condensed confession and crystallize on some such vital core, they cannot be morally very influential with a solidary state. And they must postpone much hope of Church union. For that is a matter of historical and theological understanding, even more than of Christian sentiment and Christian work. The Churches do feel together, and they do work together, and they grow together on those lines. But the last barrier and the greatest is the matter of a common belief, which is therefore the greatest and strongest bond of all to men who must be at least as faithful to a trust as they are true to an ideal. It is ill for a Church to be more occupied with an ideal than with a trust.

§

The Church, therefore, with such a Gospel in trust, is not a private corporation but a

public, not a club but an institution ; and, with such a Spirit, Holy and Humane, for its life, it is not a group but a social personality, a greater *vis-à-vis* of the personality of the State. And as such it is entitled to recognition, both courteous, sympathetic, and practical, from the great organs of the public. The State is the Church's beneficiary, and to be thankless to it would be ignoble. It is entitled to privilege within the State, alien as it is to patronage. It can be honoured if it cannot be controlled, and graced if it may not be endowed. It does not take special gifts carrying with them control, but it ought to have special consideration and room, corresponding to the unique nature of its work for society. That is no more than the recognition of its characteristic ethical genius and method, and its moral parity (to say no more) with the State in the matter of right. The State which guards rights should give special place and welcome to the society whose genius is the duty and service which found all right in the cross. And it should concede such privileges as consist with the freedom of the Church's personality and the facility of its service. Gifts from the State do not in the long run make for

these, since they are always accompanied with some conditions and controls; and also because it is impossible, with the modern number and parity of Churches, to give all round. For selection would mean a dogmatic judgment by the State. The great principle is the recognition by the State that the Church has intrinsic and autonomous rights at least equal in sanction, if superior in kind, to those of the State itself; and that there is due to it such scope as is required and such honour as is deserved by the nature of the Church's personality and the character of its work for mankind. For instance, in connexion with the Church's absolute control of its own membership, the orderly and statutory proceedings of the Church, or its representatives, in the discussion of questions of moral character and conduct should be expressly recognized as privileged at law and not libellous. At present any case of discipline in a Free Church may involve an action for libel or slander. In respect of the Church's ownership and control of property, its representative officers for the time being should be its trustees, and the transfer of trusteeship should be simplified and cheapened

accordingly. For those Churches that wish it their duly ordained ministers should be *ipso facto* empowered to perform marriage. And the moral judgment of the Church should be if not a final plea a very weighty factor indeed in the considerations that regulate divorce. The Church's income should be exempt from taxation in view of its vast public service; and its ministers, like doctors, exempted from certain public duties as on juries, as well as from magistracy. As theology proper is the monopoly of the Church, which is its expert as a culture, the Church's work in this department of civilization should be utilized by the State universities in the way which I hope in later pages to explain at more length. And some Nonconformists would not object to grants to efficient Sunday schools, not for religion, but for religious knowledge in so far as it was examinable, and reached a standard qualifying in other subjects of knowledge. If the Churches were united on such a creative dogma as I have named above, and a parliament of Churches sat in London or elsewhere, there does not seem to be anything in the freedom or autonomy of the Church that should decline the courtesy of a State visit from the

Premier or even the Monarch, along with their congratulations, such as the assemblies of the several Churches at present receive and prize from the mayors of the cities where they meet.

§

It cannot be made too clear that the right of the Church (in its various Churches) is intrinsic and autochthonous. That is to say, its origin lay in no concession by the State. That is not what makes a Church a public corporation with an autonomy. The validity of its right is independent of the State. It grew up within the State, beneath its pressure, and in spite of its weight. It lifted that weight, and even broke it, as a tender plant has been known to raise or split a flagstone. Its nature is quite different from law in the State. Its leadership is spiritual and not secular, and its last appeal is not to force but to conscience. Its right belongs to the class of public corporations and not private because it has no ends of its own, its parish is the world, its range international, and its beneficiary the whole of society as it is the whole of the soul. It is not by its nature a private corpora-

tion like a trading society. Nor is it a public corporation in the sense in which a municipality is. For in both these cases the right is a franchise conferred by the State; whereas in the case of the Church, public as its corporate life and right is, it is a right which the State cannot confer but must yet recognize. Or, as some jurists put it, there is a special region of right which it inhabits, outside what is known to jurisprudence as right private and public.

This claim for the true nature of the Church has been made most conspicuously and successfully, first, by the Roman Church in the Latin world, and second by the Free Churches of Anglo-Saxondom. By the greater Protestant confessions, as in Germany, it has not been realized, or it has been sacrificed to a Byzantinism whose awful and subtle results are, at the date of writing, ravaging Europe (Appendix II). In this respect one long line of true spiritual tradition is maintained from the Church's rise in the first centuries, through the canon law of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, to the Nonconformity of England and America. Of the opposite tradition the Anglican Church is the chief example, well supported by the Lutheran.

This is the tradition which says that the public liberty of a Church (to discipline its membership, for instance) is but a section of a right of association which is created by the State, is at its mercy, and is conceded (if conceded) only to an established Church. For instance, the voluntary submission of believers to the regulations of their Church might give to the Church no right which the State would recognize. Such a pledge might be void at law, and might bar no action which an aggrieved member might raise against his community. In a case where his character was discussed at a Church meeting would he be barred from an action for libel by his previous consent to submit to Church procedure? Might the courts not hold that any pledge by which he contracted out of his citizen rights was illegal? The State, that is, does not recognize in the Church the right it would recognize in a registered club. The club would have a private right recognized by the State because conferred by it directly or indirectly. But no such right could be recognized in a Church without a like donation and licence. But then no true Church could either ask or accept such a

thing. Here the sovereignty of the State must accept a limit, as it does on another plane in the family.

A self-denying ordinance in respect of the Church of the Gospel should be part of the law of the land. The Church has an idea of right beyond what can be asserted before a court of the realm. There is a right of the public outside the law of the land. Conscience is not a creature of the courts, nor their vassal. And there is in Christianity, by the universality of its redemption, a treatment of conscience which dissolves both the barriers of States and their supremacy, even in their own territory. This plea is familiar on the part of the Roman Church (where, however, it is complicated by the farther claim of that Church, as in “benefit of clergy,” to be a temporal empire and juristic body rival to the State). The Catholic Church raises the claim on the ground that it is older than the State and the mother of modern states; that it has a historic prerogative, therefore, in comparison with them. Nor only so. It takes the ground also that it is international—the one grand international society of history, and therefore supernational. But, still farther,

its last stand is upon the plea that it descended out of heaven from God, that its varied organization is His creation and no creature of mere historic conditions, temporal expediency, or man's voluntary device. It claims to come from the same divine source as the State, but with an overriding mandate which entitles it to call on the State as the State may not call on it.

But this is also the claim raised *mutatis mutandis* by the Church in its other aspect, its voluntary aspect—in Protestantism, and especially in the extremest and purest form of Protestantism, in the Congregational “Covenant.” While the Catholic side of the Church properly emphasizes its obverse of descent from heaven as a pure gift and creation from God, the Protestant side lays stress on its empirical reverse as a voluntary and contractual *coetus* of men. I have in another place tried to adjust these two complementary aspects of the Church, and to show that, even in the Congregational Covenant, centering on the new creation in Jesus Christ, we have, over the combining will of men, the choosing and donating and absolute free grace of God. That is the source of a

right over which the State has no power, except to appreciate it, recognize it, and retire.

But of course it is implied here that the covenant should have, for the nucleus of its claim, some positive statement of that Gospel which turns into a Church a consenting group. The founding, or the ending, of the right peculiar to a Church cannot be at the mercy of individuals and their arbitrary decision. No individual nor group of them can either set up a Church or discard the idea of a Church at choice. The existence of the thing and the privilege of the name turn on something beyond the will of men, something done creatively and collectively by God, which the will but owns or disowns, and the mouth confesses or ignores. The right is His gift in His grace and gospel. Where that is *there* is the Church, its rights and its liberties. It is a right that goes with a human obedience to a given and eternal Gospel, and not with a human project, device, or discovery of religion. The right belongs to the revelation and not to the religion. The Church's right is not man's right but the right of a regenerating God in man. It rises out of our confession

not of a liberty but of a monarch superior to the State's. And the civic liberty to refuse such a confession is no part of Christian liberty, and no basis for Church autonomy. What makes the Church's right belong to the order of public right is not the religion of some, but the objective basis it has in its revelation for all. The true right of a Church to an autonomy underived from the State is the right of the confessed Gospel of Humanity; it is not the mere civic right of combination. The State is there in virtue of our first creation, but the Church is there in virtue of a second and greater creation in Redemption. That is to say, the right of the Church is there by a superior fiat of the same power as gives its right to the State. Unless of course we discard the idea of a new creation altogether, and look on redemption as but the spiritual stage and top story of the evolution of the one creation, treating grace but as the superlative of nature. In which case the Church of Grace has no independent right or charter, and is little more than the State turned religious, and society indulging its own religion rather than bowing to God's revelation.

The sovereignty of the State reaches just as far as its power goes, i.e. as far as it can enforce it. But in the region of conscience it cannot enforce it. And least of all has it power or even relevancy in connexion with that treatment or exercise of the conscience which makes the Church an evangelical society—the redemption of it. What makes the Church the Church is outside the region where the king's writ runs. It is where he cannot and dare not enter. It is in the region of the saved conscience—and not simply the suffused or elated heart. The Church is not the State sublimated.

§

Such recognition and even privilege as I have described does not carry with it direct action of the State in the promotion or partnership of the Church's work. No State, for instance, has the right to aid religious education by making some form of it (at parental choice) compulsory as secular education is. Nor is it easy to see how the State could collaborate, as State, in the work peculiar to the Church. It cannot be indifferent to it, but neither can it take positive part in it. Though

it can have no part in steering the ship of the Church, it can keep the channels open, it might even utilize the organized service. It can have no part in the appointment to Church office, nor in the use of Church funds, which it may not even enhance. It may not prescribe the education of the Church's ministers, though it may recognize and utilize in its universities the eminence of the Church's own schools in their subject. No privilege can be accepted by the Church which carries with it any diminution in its self-government, nor anything which turns recognition into a guardianship of spiritual things or a tutelage of salvation. Even if the State think that the Church is in danger of developing movements which seem to imperil the ethical interests in the State's charge (such as those of property) it has no right to intervene otherwise than by representations—if, indeed, the parliament of a modern State should ever come to believe itself a moral guide or critic more competent than the Church, whose speciality is the matter of God and the conscience. The utmost that could go with any privilege from the State would be *influence* by it, as distinct from any form of control,

influence by it as another moral body whose pleas should be considered. The whole case is that both State and Church are bodies so great, so ethical, and so intimate, that it must always be impossible to avoid influence passing both ways, and undesirable besides. The impossible thing is mutual indifference and neutrality. Neither body is the negative of the other. Both are public corporations, each in its own right, though in a different sense of public; and their relations are positive—by way of mutual recognition. To a private corporation, like a club or a commercial company, the relation of the State or the Law is mainly negative and indifferent. The State has to see that the law is not broken. But the whole case here is that the Church is in its nature different from these, and non-legal; and that the State by its divinity has the moral power at least to recognize the *differentia*, and to vary its treatment accordingly. It does not greatly matter to the State whether a great commercial company achieve its end or not, but it matters everything to it whether the Church succeed or fail. And while the views of such a company on economics may leave the State

indifferent, so long as it keeps to its articles of association, the belief of a Church *forms* its articles of association for the law; and the State must treat such articles according to their nature and the unique nature of Church Association—as the growing mental consciousness of a living person, and not as a mere contractual bond. I have included among the native privileges of the Church the right to interpret its own articles as the will and freedom of its living soul, and to vary them without any consent but its own, or any penalty at law.

CHAPTER IX

RECOGNITION RECIPROCAL

EVERY time the Church realizes afresh its duty to the State (as it increasingly does) and fulfils it in its true and congenial way, it also urges that the State has a reciprocal duty to the Church, if it will only take a way to express it appropriate to the nature of each. The Church cannot take more interest in the State without the State taking more interest in the Church. These reciprocal relations, if they are real, cannot be felt only on one side. It would then be but meddling. And the State might well say to the Church, if you will cease meddling with me I will not seek to interfere with you. But that would mean a fatal schism between the two great ethical powers of society ; it would make a nation with a rent conscience, a soul distraught, a double morality, and action unstable and paralysed. If the Church take proper and practical cognizance of the State, the State must take proper and practical

cognizance of the Church. This is what is meant by recognition, as distinct from either establishment or neutrality, from control or indifference. The self-government of the Church is as real as the self-government of the State ; and only in such several freedom can each come to its true self in a way that makes possible mutual respect, reciprocal influence, and co-operation for society. Each pursues human perfection in its own way. And there are not two human perfections but one, if we believe either in the solidarity of the race or in the Kingdom of God. Each must practically recognize the freedom and scope of the other in its own kind. And that not simply by standing aside to let the other by, not as ships that pass with a flag dipped and no more ado, but as joint trustees of God and man. Each is chilled and pinched by a neutral relation, as they are irritated by the friction of a constant conflict for the mastery.

The privileges I have spoken of from the State to the Church indicate the nature of such recognition as I mean. They are not gifts from the State to the Church ; they are recognitions of higher gifts. When the State comes to treat the Church's freedom to deal

with its old beliefs as a living personality would deal with them in the light of a new age, it is not conferring on the Church either a power or a freedom to which it had no previous right ; it is recognizing the will of the State's own God for the Church, His work in it, His gift of right to it, and His claim for it ; it is ceasing to resist the Spirit, and removing the obstacles it had put in the Spirit's way. It is preparing the Spirit's way and making straight paths for His feet. It is paying honour where the last honour is due. It may even afford facilities, as it does for instance in putting on the strength of the Army and Navy chaplains maintained by various denominations. There is no principle that forbids such facilities, so long as they do not become the monopoly of one Church which claims them by prerogative, but are the right of all the Churches in a spirit of service.

§

To treat the Churches as private corporations is to ignore that distinctive ethical quality which places them at least on a level with the State itself in intrinsic right ; and it is to reduce them to the pursuit of sectional ends, with a negative right that the more universal State confers. It

would mean that before the law the Church differed not at all from any other company that men promote. It would have no feature of its own as a corporation. For the law it would be simply a piece of the world like any other incorporated society, trading in a somewhat refined class of goods. It would be on the same footing as a literary or musical institute, a spiritual *conservatoire* (incorporated). As a private corporation it would not be a Church, while as a Church it would for the law simply not exist. The State's relation to it would simply be police—indifferent to everything but breaches of law and order. That is the present position of all the non-established Churches in English law. And it has been said that it is the position which every Church must accept as non-established. I have been trying to point out that this cannot be so, that the very nature of the Church, through its universal Gospel, involves a public right in parity with the State's own, and only to be recognized by it—unless the State so unmoralize itself as to disclaim any eye for moral values. And then an Absolutism so unmoral would show itself in its true cynical Napolconic and Teutonic nakedness.

But it cannot be denied that the Churches have themselves in some measure to thank for such an opinion of them by the State. When they were coming into being as Churches in their adolescence, there have been times and places plenty where they offered the aspect of sects. They were conventicular. Some were apocalyptic in the way they doomed the State and the world alike. Or others were groups for the culture of piety or theology. They did a family trade. They resemble those shops inscribed with the strange announcement, "families supplied." They were an aggregate of family pews, and they did not go much beyond the notion of individual or domestic religion. The worship was much in the nature of family prayers. They developed a bourgeois religion rather than a civic, a comfortable and Cheeryble Christianity. They developed a sectional ethic rather than a social, wherein the Sunday dinner and the home reunion was an element as essential as the "diet of worship" and often more prized. It cannot be denied that it was a type associated with much that was both godly and attractive, pious and cultured, especially where the family means were easy. The minister might even be affluent,

and good to himself as to his people ; and the atmosphere comfortable, deliberate and grave. It formed the nursery of much that is valuable to society at any time. And it produced many champions of religious toleration and of municipal prosperity. But it had not the national nor the universal nor the apostolic note. It did not grasp that side and significance of the Church. It was more legal than humane ; it was benevolent but nomistic. It did not realize the great and true position of the Church in relation to Humanity. We do not find it easy to-day to picture the kind of Church existing before the advent of modern missions or social reform. It was the birthplace of philanthropy, but it did not rise to modern Humanism. The fruits of the Church's faith were beneficent, but the idea of the Church itself was sectarian. The Churches were private bodies enjoying a liberty allowed by a tolerant State ; they were not public bodies, knowing themselves to have rights parallel to the State, equal in sanction and higher in kind.

But now not only are the sect-making days over, the sects themselves have become Churches. Some years ago Wesleyan Methodism formally abjured its description as a mere

society, and assumed the name of Church. It has always been the mission of Congregationalism to claim that its societies were Churches. And it is not a matter of name only, A new social interest has come to pervade not one Church alone but all the Churches, and the non-established in particular. The whole Church is on its way to become as much mixed up with human society as a certain section of it has been with county society. Public affairs, larger even than the range of what is usually known as social reform, have been forced on its attention as the note of religion was affected by the ethical revival. The sects were drawn from their cloistered and conventicle habit of mind. They assumed a partnership in national affairs, however indirect and guarded, which is one of the marks that distinguish a Church from a sect. It should be borne in mind that a sect was originally defined as such not merely by theological peculiarities but by its lack of relation to the State. In this sense Romanism is in England a sect. To take the name of a Church is really to assume such a real relationship to the nation as cannot be indifferent to the State, nor observe a mere neutrality. It would be quite possible of

course that this public interest should acquire a wrong form. It might be tempted to apply to the State direct pressure, and interference of a kind that would be resented from the State. But that need not follow. The national responsibility of the Churches need not always express itself in direct action by them as Churches, but in the action as citizens of the Christian men reared by them on the moral principles of a world salvation and a Kingdom of God. For the Church to apply direct pressure to the State is a form of Papalism opposite in direction but on the same level as the Caesarism which the Churches repel. The point is that the responsibility of the Church to the State is acknowledged in the same process as raises the Christian body from a sect to a Church. Its interests grow more large, national and historic.

§

The sectarian position is one that becomes more impossible with the moral development both of Church and State. No doubt in reducing the Church to a private corporation it suggests a certain liberty in the Church. But it is an irresponsible liberty, a freedom unchartered and tiring. It is apt to be a

freedom detached from historic tradition responsibility, and service, and apt therefore to descend to the trivial interests that are the curse of a religion more popular in its temper than public in its spirit. Every Church has responsibilities to the nation or State which should correct a freedom of the cellular or sectional kind. But it does not follow that the acknowledgment of such responsibility means the admission of control by the State in a positive way, by the State's intervention in Church affairs. It is a moral responsibility and not a legal; and it is much shaped by the long large history of a people. The repudiation of state control does not mean either that the Church has no responsibility to the State, or that the State can show no appreciation of the Church, and no acknowledgment. Such privileges as I have alluded to are a recognition by the State of the vast service the Church renders to it, and also of the right to such room as that free service requires. The liberation that is sought is not spiritual severance but "liberation from State patronage and control." Any separation of Church and State which ended in absolute neutrality and mutual indifference

would not mean separation simply. It would mean State Paganism—that for the State the Church as a Church ceased to exist. It would mean its destruction in the eye of the law, its reduction to that non-existence for the law which is the present position of every Church but one in the land—its non-existence till it made itself some kind of a nuisance, and became known to the police. This is a position which no Church could accept as it rose from the sect sense to the Church sense. As it became aware of its native right it would be bound to press for the recognition of that right, and to repudiate a freedom conferred by a State which it would admit to be absolute in accepting it. It cannot be a right or sound condition of the morale of any nation that the Church which is its chief moral asset should be declared by the State to be no Church, but a group of religious hobbyists, or shareholders in a religious concern with whose prosperity the State had nothing particular to do. The forms which the State's recognition of the Church might take are matters of discussion and of circumstances ; the point is that the separation should not leave the partners dead to each other, or

pretending not to know each other when they met, as they must.

§

And the suggestion rises here that the normal relation of State and Church is not divorce but true marriage. If we could look away from the irritant conditions produced for a time by historical circumstances due to errors past, if we could do that on the one hand ; and if on the other we could release the idea of marriage from the question of settlements, and raise it to its true moral and spiritual level—if we could do that, I say, we might find marriage to be the right analogy and relation between Church and State. It would be a marriage of the kind in which amid due intimacy personal respect is never lost, in which the freedom of each gives divine value to their voluntary bonds, where neither dictates to the other but each is moulded by each, each recognizes and develops the spiritual idiosyncrasy of each. When we look forward to a day in which love will be the principle of society let us sometimes rise above the sentiment of relations merely individual, and intercourse personally kind or urbane ; and

let us think of that divine principle as ruling the relations to each other also of great entities and corporations which, like Church and State, give dignity to kindness and lend majesty to affection. Man and wife are not simply facts to each other, they are powers—the more powerful for each other as there is the less pressure and the more influence. The moral union and action is far deeper than the legal, and the moral right to be and to grow is one conferred by neither side on the other. If either is determined to be master, and to have it owned, there may be nothing but separation for it. That is the result Ultramontanism has produced in France, through the Absolutism of the Church, which produces the equal and opposite extreme, the Absolutism of the State. There is a secular Ultramontanism in France; there might be a Protestant in England. The Free Church principle of the autonomy of the spiritual power has a common base with the legitimate Catholic claim. It is not the catholicism of the Roman Church that is dooming it, it is the capture of its catholicism by curialism, by the temporal power, the political interest and method. That has also been the damaging effect of Erastianism

on the Catholicism of the Anglican Church. The Church is politicized. It is captured for polities. And is there no danger of such a capture of evangelical Catholicism by political methods, no risk that we should have a Protestant Ultramontanism, i.e. a promotion of the spiritual ideals of the Church (like its autonomy) by purely political means? And that might lead to a separation so barren that, if we survived the moral decay, the energy left with us might move to a restoration of the connexion in some artificial form too juridical and too little spiritual.

§

The wise and beneficent modes of recognition form a matter of discussion by itself if we can settle on the principle, which seems the mean between two extremes equally impossible, control and neutrality. The two powers are different in kind, though one in goal; but if distinct they are also inseparable. It is a question of readjustment, in the interest of a free State in a free Church. For that is the form the phrase must take in a true perspective of moral values and majesties.

At one end we have the State ruling the Church in some form of Byzantinism ; at the other we have the two out of all practical relation, in some form of sectarianism which reduces the Church to a position foreign to its public nature or aims, and brings it down to groups of private corporations. And the one extreme is as incongruous as the other. Erastianism is now outgrown and out of date. It is impossible that the Church, the one society in the world which has an absolutely universal power and destiny, should be treated by the State like a gas company, and that as a Church it should for the State simply not exist. When Margaret Fuller was reported to Carlyle to have said that she accepted the universe the grim sage replied, "Gad ! she'd better." And the sooner the State understands and accepts the Church, and accepts it as the larger whole, frontal and final for Humanity, the better. But the Christian view is that the universe had also to accept Margaret. And the Church must also accept the State, and spiritually include it in its greater world and freedom. It is now false and impossible that the Church should be but a member of the State and its constitution part of the constitu-

tion of the country. But it is equally impossible that the State should be but an outlander to a Church which is the Kingdom of God in the making. The State must not extinguish the independence of the Church ; but as little can the Church boycott the independence of the State. Property is the province of the State, and the Church can hold its property only by an understanding with the State, and by a statement of its belief and claim which the State can grasp and recognize even while abjuring a theological decision or an ecclesiastical preference. If a free Church could only be had at the cost of reducing the Church to a private corporation then a free Church would be had too dear. Its freedom would be a freedom to be and do something foreign to its nature, something which it really desired neither to do nor be. State and Church are indeed distinct ; but that does not forbid an external adjustment of the internal contrast, nor a neighbourliness, sympathetic and co-operative, which is more than a mere interim peace or armistice on the way to something else. There can be no toleration by the State which makes the Church accept its right and freedom as a State

gift ; but only that in which the State recognizes a right from the same source as its own only higher. And it is not the State that erects the Church into such a corporation. It is as such a spiritual corporation and personal organism that the Church approaches the State or the State finds the Church. It is the Church that fixes its own relation to the State. The whole question must be solved at last on the Church principle and not the State ; as Time must take its final law from Eternity. Here Rome is so far right. And were the essence, the dogma, of the Church a hierarchical institution instead of a gospel, Rome would be quite right. The protection for the State here is that the nature of the Church's power is different in kind from that of the State. It is not force but influence. And they are not rivals but rather allies. I would have said complements but that I wished to suggest that their relation was that of powers in a parity of right, though not in identity of kind. They are like two nations that are obliged to make a treaty. Indeed, as the Church is an international power, its relation to the various states involves in principle international law, though in fact it is determined by national history.

If the Church defy the State it is not rebellion, it is war.

This, as I say, means that the State shall recognize the idea of the Church to be realized not in one body but in several, each with an equal right, and together superior at last to its own. Concurrent endowment is a dream, but not so concurrent recognition. Any due recognition must be concurrent, and no Church can seek any privilege denied to another, nor function in it, except perhaps as the mandatory of the rest. As between the Churches a hegemony and not a dominion a concurrence and not a priority, as between Church and State a concordat and not a dotation.

CHAPTER X

CHURCH AND STATE MORE A RELIGIOUS THAN A POLITICAL QUESTION

THERE is a freedom of the Church, we have seen, which contradicts the very notion of a Church. It is a freedom secured only on a ground of political equality, regardless of what the Christian principle might be. Hence the movement towards disestablishment within an established Church (owing to the growth of spiritual life, and its autonomy of obedience to the Spirit) is, from the point of view of the Church, more valuable than the political and electoral movements in the same direction. The Church everywhere must be a little cool to a freedom secured by the mere voting pressure of a democracy which tends to say to Established Church and Free a plague on both your houses. That would mean the treatment by the public of all Churches as private corporations, just as the old Socialism is said to have treated all religion as a private affair with

which our neighbour had no business, and which was not its brother's keeper. On such lines the freedom of the Church would not be recognized, hardly even conferred, but thrown to it or thrust on it. It would be the result of State power, and even State Absolutism. But the power in which the Church claims its true freedom is not political. Mere political power is alien to the Church's power. For it rests at last on force, on the natural man; and the Church not only does not, but by its nature cannot. The Church asks the State to own practically that positive and aboriginal nature, and to give it not sanction but room. The Church is an institution of salvation, the State is an institution of coercion. The State is there for such power, resorting ultimately to force, the Church is not. The authorities of a Church are not there as the end of the Church, but only as means for the Church's true end. The State serves society directly, but the officers of the Church serve directly the Church, and not society—society but indirectly. The Church truly exists for society, but only in a sense compatible with the higher truth that society exists for the true Church, which is the inception

of the Kingdom of God. The supreme power in a nation is the State, but the supreme influence in it is the Church. The State has order for its first charge, the Church has redemption. Order may be Heaven's first law, but its supreme purpose is higher ; it is salvation, which is not of ordered law but of miraculous grace. In the region of law the Church must on the whole recognize the State, but in the region of grace the Church is there to convert law to the recognition and reverence of grace. Morally and primarily it is at least the State's peer, legally and secondarily it is the State's subject. So long as we are in the region of law the State is sovereign. But no State will remain sovereign long if not fed from moral reservoirs which lie above the level of law, and if its law is not gradually regenerated and moralized by the principles of grace as the final ethic of the world. That is social progress. The Church therefore is not a State within the State, it is certainly not an Empire above the State. It is a spiritual corporation, or a federation of corporations, between States, not another but the bond of all. It is on this ground that it asks the recognition of its native freedom as

a public corporation not formed by a contract but created by grace, not created by the device of man but by the act of God. If act of God is a good plea in law at all the Church should have the fullest benefit of it. If it can be pleaded for some destructive intervention far more for a creative.

§

It is an unfortunate thing for the discussion of the Church question on its true merits, i.e. its discussion as a world-question, if more interest is fastened on the rights of a lay State against the Church than on the rights of the Christian society among the States. It is really the question of an international society, and the true international is the moral and spiritual. The dominant principles in every Church question must be the religious. Great as our concern must be for the State and its aspect of society, yet, for Christian people, the religious society must be an interest greater still. It would be an inversion of values if in this country the perspective came to be what it is in France. Here the movement against an Established Church is led by Churches, and in so far as it is a lay question it is a question for a Chris-

tian laity. But there it is led by a laity which believes only in the Absolutism of the State. This is but the erection of one organized absolutism for another, and it comes to be a struggle between the Christian society and a society which is non-Christian, with a constant bias to the anti-Christian. It is a conflict between a Christian society with a false belief in polity and a pagan society with a true, between a Church paganized by its polity and a State moralized by it. But the question of the relation of Church and State must, for a Christian people, be primarily a Church question, to be settled by the moral nature of the Christian spirituality and its freedom. The Christian Gospel has the ethical principle not simply of the Church but of the new Humanity and its social order. If the relation of Church and State is wrong it is more insufferable to the Church than to the State. It is the evangelical principle creating the Church that resents it most. Free Churchism rests ultimately on the principle of free grace, upon the evangelical freedom and autonomy and not the natural and political. Hence if in the Free Churches of this country the interest in such a question became mainly political, if they

came to be captured by a habit of mind chiefly parliamentarian, if the discussion were conducted chiefly in the atmosphere of political expediency and party strife rather than Christian doctrine and principle, the whole issue would be dragged to a level in which the Church does not freely breathe, where it loses its royal insight, and parts with its vast dignity and influence. We should have bartered spiritual leadership for political success. Which is Erastianism.

I do not mean that such a question must never become a party or platform question. That is quite necessary where it is a question of ending or mending a political situation. If only we are well established in grace and its principle of social organization. What I mean is that it is our business as Churchmen to let it be clear that for us the Church means more than even the State ; that it is neither the audience of a popular preacher nor the asset of a political party ; that the principles of the relation descend from the Church on the State and are not imposed from the State's domain, nor prescribed by mere political justice ; that it is in the interest of the Church and on the principles

of its theology that our convictions are formed ; that if we go to platform or press on the subject we go in the name of spiritual liberty positive, creative, and experienced, more than of political equality ; and that if we were convinced that anything like Establishment were the will of Christ for His Church no political considerations would have decisive weight with us, and we should have to evangelize the public to that effect. The question, that is, is not primarily a question of democracy but of theocracy, not of the will of the people but of the will of God found in holier sources than the people's voice. The mere fact that such is the *nature* of the question really settles the *answer*. For a Church that is practically ruled by a modern parliament is not ruled by the will of God and cannot be. Parliaments are not elected with reference to the will of God. And they consist of all kinds of people, among whom the sort of person who should be most influential in the Church is like a prophet among the Sauls. It grows quite clear now to everybody that, whatever the mode of connexion may be between Church and State, parliament cannot continue to be the great commissure. What that must be

is not so clear; but it will emerge when we come to practical rearrangements. We are here concerned with the method and principle of the issue, with the creative and regulative idea which must govern all arrangements.

That norm it is essential that we should find in our fundamental spiritual principle, that we should find our Church principles in that which makes us Christians, and not in that which merely makes us citizens. It is as "saints" that we are Free Churchmen, not as voters. We must always vote in the long run for that which we realize to be the relevant will of God in Christ. If that will were Erastian we could not help ourselves; we must settle to the traditional situation. But because it is the opposite pole to Erastianism we cannot let things rest. If Erastianism attract many by the promise of free thought we can but reply that they have to pay a great price for their freedom while we are *freeborn*. The kind of Church liberty we represent is founded in the new birth, in the free soul and not a free theology—inevitable as that is to the freedom of the Gospel.

It is as Churchmen, therefore, that we de-

fine the place of the State ; it is not as statesmen that we define the place of the Church. That is Gallican, Teutonic, Byzantine. It is neither English nor Christian. And if control by the laity mean the politicizing of such an issue then lay control must accept a setback, in favour of the priestly control by all true believers. The demand for the autonomy and supremacy of the believer within the Church (a royal priesthood) is a demand not for political equality but for the intrinsic right of the Church before the State, i.e. for the freedom of its birth, for a freedom higher in its source and nature than civil freedom, and recognized by the civil power, not conferred by it.

It follows that the first requisite for the Free Churches in claiming that right is not a platform but a dogma. That is, it is not a political programme nor a parliamentary party ; it is such a clear, final, and common statement of the truth to which they owe their existence as I have indicated by the word dogma in earlier pages. The terms of this would not constitute articles of association in such a way that the Churches formed a religious trust for them. But these terms would

rather be a badge, or a manifesto, or a statement of claim for the information of the State ; which would then not supervise the fiduciary action of the Church but trust the Church, with such a foundation, to look after its own life and liberty, and manage its own property in its own righteous discretion. It were better that the Church should here and there make a mistake, and abuse property by an extreme and fatal tension of this common and elastic declaration, than that it should be kept to it, and defended from itself, by the guardianship of the courts. The State's duty to the Church that makes such a general manifesto of the Gospel is to trust it to manage its own affairs, and to develop its own life and faith in regions which the courts can no more traverse than the foster-mother hen can follow her ducklings when they float out on their own element.

The Churches are therefore driven to some form of dogma, however brief and central, both by the nature of their Gospel, by their prosperity as property owners, and by a State necessity in connexion therewith. It is singular that while the secular and political type of mind tends to despise and denounce

dogma it is the State which these people affect that creates a necessity for it more urgent often than the need felt by some Churches of the day. This is not a new experience. Before the division of the Churches into East and West the Councils worked at their doctrine with the view of its being presented for final ratification to the Emperor (whose place has for the West been taken by the Pope). And it was not dogma till it had the State seal.

§

We cannot expect the State to surrender at discretion, or to give up its guardianship of property at a call from any group using the name of Church but presenting nothing more. If the State is to own the Church's inner and native right it must be presented with such a programme of the Church's charge, purpose, and hope, as by its nature elicits, not to say extorts, such recognition. The claimant must make good its differentia from a group in a way to justify public treatment as a Church. The State does quite right in claiming the guardianship of property—till such time as a steward deputed by the true Owner comes forward with his credentials to take

entire charge. And the form that such credentials must take, in dealing with courts to persuade them to abdicate, is more or less documentary. It must be in the nature of a statement of the average belief of the group in something whose belief makes it a Church.

The State is a sacred entity. It is not without religion. A State absolutely neutral to religion is in this country unthinkable. It has enough to enable it to recognize its spiritual Superior, and to own that the time has come to stand aside for a greater control in affairs directly His. No form of the separation of Church and State is adequate to the spiritual situation which desires the possibility or the propriety of a positive attitude of the State to religion. It is true that that is not quite the same question as its attitude to particular religious organizations. Disestablishment need not mean that the State ignores religion. But all the same a religious State cannot at this time of day, with all that has come and gone in history, be religious and nothing more. It is not with religion that society has now to do, but with distinct forms of religion. There is no such thing as religion *per se*. It is always some particular type of religion. Religion

per se has never existed. It would be a mere abstraction ; and an abstraction has no power to be a religion, or have the effect of one. And the form of religion that society has now to do with is Christianity. But as with religion generally, so with Christian religion—it exists only in concrete and positive forms. It organizes itself by its very nature into particular intelligent and social forms. It lives only as confessions and Churches. So that the religious interest which is not forbidden to the State is really and practically an interest in some form or forms, of the Christian Church. A Churchless Christianity is but a pale and ineffectual religiosity, unworthy of and inadequate to, the life, vigour and energy (or even the attention) of anything so great as a State.

The problem therefore of the State's interest in religion is the problem of its relation to the Church in the concrete Churches, its relation to religion presenting its claim in certain forms organized both for intelligence and action. These forms may be simple, not to say primitive, if only they are positive, central, and dynamic. There is more chance of the State, as the practical focus of society, owning the inner right and majesty of a Church

which confessed it was there in the name of God reconciling the world in Christ than of its feeling any spell or mastery in a programme which embraced but a vague spirituality and a chartless freedom. The public and practical organ of society as a vast living and active Humanity is more responsive to a positive and active Gospel than to the mere testimony of a divine presence or a pantheistic suffusion. For the one, dealing as it does with moral redemption, comes nearer than the rest to that free conscience whose rights modern States recognize. And this is to say nothing of the potency of the one rather than the others for that moral and saving action which, if it be not the first care of the State, is the first condition of stability in its progress. It is to be added that such inner right on the Church's part does not mean any direct invasion by it of the right of the State. It only means that the State shall in its presence recognize the limits of its own right.

§

And as we handle such principles we shall have to note among other things the change that has come over the idea of the State as

well as the Church since some of our notions of separation were framed. The State from a *Rechtsstaat* has become a *Kulturstaat*. From a police State it has become a fostering State. It has not only a protectorate but a mission. It has become more than a condition of civilization, it is its agent. It does more than keep order, it promotes progress and represents fraternity. It not only secures the conditions of life, property and culture, it acts in their positive interest, and especially in the interest and welfare of the whole community, and more particularly of its weak. It interprets civilization in a much more ethical and sympathetic way than in the old individualist and *laissez faire* days. If it is not a moral pioneer at least it strives to give effect in its legislation to the rising demand of the ethical average of the public. It is a growing contributor to the moral culture of society. As it becomes more of a group person, it has in its own way more and more regard to the moral personality—encouraging it for the service of the whole, and exalting and deepening it in its social ideals. If it cannot make men good, it can provide conditions in the interest of goodness, and it can do much to arrest the infectious

power of the bad. It is no longer possible to treat it as non-divine. If secular it is not secularist. It is in some ethical parity with the Church, if it is not in an equality. It is a power for the higher world. It is certainly not (as Augustine said) the organization of sin. It is the champion of Humanity, and the promoter of culture. If it disestablish the Church it establishes education high and low. It has discovered the child, the woman, the workman. It regards the tone and happiness of society, it does not simply keep a ring for the egoists and accept the survival of the fittest. It has missions, like the Church, only in another vein—to poverty if not to sin. We cannot say as bluntly as once that the State means fight and force, the Church heart, conscience, conviction; nor that the State means external coercion while the Church means psychological. We cannot any more say that the State is aristocratic, and works with laws that descend on society, while the Church is democratic with a law rising from below. For the Church's law is its King's, and descends on us as no legislation can. Rather the State is democratized, and the Church is humanized, and its doctrine moral-

ized. For the Church has changed also, and she has social interests which she must press in her own way. She is less concerned for pure doctrine, so long as she has a real Gospel ; and she is more concerned for a pure people and a just thereby. She is exercised about the poverty of the people ; but she is more concerned with the prevention of poverty than its cure.

Such changes in each body must affect their relation to each other. Each has a higher and stronger self-consciousness, and therefore more prospect of a worthy understanding and a helpful relation ; for feeble personality makes poor union. The State is more Christian, the Church is more human. Hence, while the question remains, the posing of it is altered. And therewith the style of polemic. The leading interest is less the political equality of all the Churches, than their spiritual autonomy in so far as they are really Churches, and their consequent moral power to serve the public. It becomes more of a spiritual question than a political. And the manner of its discussion changes accordingly from village recrimination or persecution to mutual respect and the effort to understand. The State may be

viewed by the Church as the junior partner in the Kingdom of God.

§

There is apt to be a peculiar bitterness about the conflict of Church and State, as indeed about all religious wars, because they are in the nature of a family feud. It is not the battle of a moral power with an unmoral, but of two moral powers with each other, of two that ought not to be at war though they differ in rank and dignity. The ethical power of the Church is in conflict with an ethical law in the State (for the very force of the State is an ethical and not a brutal thing, and the juridical is a great advance on the natural). It is moral conviction on both sides, which is the most ideal, and also the most intractable, of all the ideal powers. It is a conflict different from other public issues, a supreme form of the collision of duties, or the clash of consciences. But from the supreme battle comes the supreme victory. And, though the Church and State question in the region of polities may threaten to be the toughest and bitterest of all such issues, yet that only casts us higher upon our spiritual

resources; and its solution in this higher than the political plane means more than anything else for the Kingdom of God and the perfection of man.

CHAPTER XI

CHURCH, STATE, AND THEOLOGICAL TEACHING¹

A FREE Church in a free State is an indelible ideal; but it becomes us to be as clear as possible about what is meant by it. The notion that the State has nothing to do with religion is hard to cherish if we acquire a historic sense of the spiritual world, if we distrust short cuts through old problems, and if we try to think out the actual situations it would create. If we combine both "hindsight" and foresight we realize that State and Church must, by the very nature of the indivisible Soul and by the course of history, touch and affect each other at many points; and they must know they do. Yet, on the supposed neutrality, we should have no principle to determine how the inevitable situation should be resolved,

¹ The writer wishes to say, first, that in this chapter he speaks only for himself, though after much sympathetic discussion with other members of the Theological Faculty of London University; and, second, that he is in sympathy with the main drift of the Report of the recent Commission.

no principle for the due and practical recognition of the one by the other. Such recognition there must be, and it must be mutual—recognition in the sense of appreciation and greeting (not to say facilities), in the sense of mutual service and not mere criticism, and yet not in the sense of patronage, subsidy, or control. The Church, on the one hand, is bound to recognize the State. It must take note both of the degree of divineness in it, and also of certain aspects of the overt policies it pursues. It has to pass moral judgment on at least some of these. And, on the other hand, it is equally inevitable that the State should take notice of the Church ; and that not only by mere tolerance of its existence as harmless to the public weal, but by salutation of it as a direct and precious contribution thereto. The more religious the nation becomes the more impossible it is to insulate the State from religion, or the Church from affairs. The problem is one of readjustment.

For a forecast of such future recognition we are not left entirely to our imagination. Education has long been the cockpit of the issue. And now certain questions in connexion with the new Universities place the situation before

us in a fresh phase. Suppose the Church dis-established, and, in the disendowment, a portion of its present resources deflected to education. In such a case the modern Universities would have a high claim to consideration in the disposition of any public funds that accrued. But in some of these Universities there is now, and there always should be, a Faculty of Theology. Would it be part of a complete Free Church programme to quash such a Faculty, on the ground that the State which endows, and ultimately controls, these Universities has nothing to do with religion ? Is the existence of a Theological Faculty in a State-subsidized University incompatible with that principle ? With that principle it certainly is. But with the Free Churches in their large and living freedom ? Is Free Churchism bound up with that principle, and with such an application of it as I name ? Would such a conclusion commend the principle or improve the prospects of Free Churchism with an educated public ? Has it been to the advantage of the Church or of theology that its culture should be quite detached from the national scheme of education, and pursued only among seminarists of the various bodies ? Their seminaries have

indeed done vast service both to religion and to society, and they are also indispensable to the Churches, which have the last word in theology after all. The intelligible penetralia of faith must always be developed in the atmosphere of faith. And theology is sure to suffer if it is cut off from the practical religion and Church whose mental expression it is. Indeed, at last it is much more than an expression of the Church ; it is the Self-presentation of a growing Christ in the form of thought, which is as necessary in its place as action. But the great and classic founders of Nonconformity were men of a lore as thorough as their faith, and of a lore schooled in the Universities of their day. *There* was learned the large utterance of our early gods. And no one who knows the facts but knows the enormous improvement in the theological colleges through their recent articulation into the new Universities, and the consequent improvement both of their staff and of their output. It is to the modern Universities that the natural affinities of the Free Churches turn, and there they breathe their kindred air (unless they are driven from them by a wrong policy, as they were from the old). From

these they have vastly benefited in the last generation, and especially the last decade. The depth and the breadth of truth should be equal. While the *intimacy* of educated religion must be cultivated by the sectional institutions, the *range* of it is secured by their contact with that aspect of national and historic life which is presented by a University. And for the Ministers of a universal religion range is no more to be neglected than intimacy, breadth than inwardness—even as a Church's theology is equally necessary to the world with its benevolence.

§

It cannot be ignored that there may still be some who would not regard the absence of a Theological Faculty from a University as a matter of regret. The Universities are State institutions, under the endowment and control of a State which must not touch religion; and Theology is a department of religion. This from the Liberationist side. While from the side of agnostic culture, or of rough realism, it may be urged that theology is mud, mist, or moonshine. On both these grounds, then (it is said), is the proper course not to let

theology alone, leave it, for what it is worth, to be cultivated by the Churches in the best way they can (if even they care enough for it), and refuse to establish religion in this form in the Universities when everything moves to its disestablishment in the Churches ?

But when we have made the passing remark that establishment and endowment are as much in place with education as they are out of place with religion, we may go on to say that to the above plea there are two answers—one at least in the form of a query—and both of them go to the root principles of the case.

1. Is theology capable of scientific treatment ? If it is not, *cadit questio*. It has no business in a University. If it is it is a vast science in its kind, handling its own facts by their congenial laws ; and how can a complete University refuse to provide for it ?

That it is not a science in the same sense as physics is of course true. A University dominated by physical science could hardly allow it. But surely Science does not now demand that everything be reduced to the laws of the physical order. It includes the finest products of thought exercised upon those principles which form the inner logic

of research itself, and which debouch into all the ultimate issues of the knowing mind. It prescribes besides, that each fact, or class of facts, be treated by the method appropriate to its unforced nature. It is a very large assumption that there is a science only of empirical facts and objectives, and no possible science of values. It is an assumption too premature, in the present state of opinion, for a whole University to embody it in its Constitution. The like difficulty, also, would arise for such a school in connexion with philosophy, or at any rate with any philosophy which did not exclude metaphysics, to say nothing of meta-ethics. In a positivist University there would be no room for psychology except of the laboratory kind, except as a department of physiology; for Comte and his school deny the mind's power to think of itself to any such purpose. But in taking such a line with theology an English University would outrun the state of competent opinion in the nation, and would range itself against a large section of the world of culture, which believes and pursues it as an imposing branch of the higher intelligence. It is not quite easy to think of a jurist as antitheological, however

cautious, reserved, or rational his theology might be. Such a University would be settling in advance and *per saltum* the question between two great sections of thought, whether faith is an organ of real knowledge. It would represent the premature capture of the State by the crude interest which puts theologians or metaphysicians in the same category as the flat-earthers or Masoretic chronologists, before the issue had been fought out in the proper quarter for such a question—the schools. This, of course, is not the place to discuss fully whether and in what sense theology deserves to be called a science. But it may be allowed that the issue is a very long way from being settled, even if we count heads, among the first-class minds of the time. A growing number of the philosophic students of religion assert for it an autonomous place, independent of the permission (though not of the action) of other laws, like those of psychology. And for students of the several religions it is impossible not to range them in a scale of value according to their content of reality. At least it is not scientifically absurd so to do, unless we commit ourselves to the slashing position now mainly outgrown to which they

are all equally false. But if religion do contain a knowledge of reality the study of its highest forms and truths is a true part of any institute of culture or science. Unless a University is so rigidly scientific as to refuse a knowledge of reality and admit a knowledge only of its behaviour, there is room and call for its pursuit of a science of revelation and not only of religion. Unless salvation is pure superstition, the science of it on its data, and especially in its history, is part of science as a whole or *universitas*. Indeed, there are very many among our best who still think that a theological Faculty represents the true meeting point of religion and science ; which point to provide is worthy of any University that aims at treating the human spirit as an ideal whole, and harmonizing its parts and its culture.

It would be peculiarly ill timed to discredit this section of the University at the present juncture, when the hard orthodoxies are moribund and a new interest is arising in religious doctrines with their social and philosophical implicates, and the idealisms that gather round them. A generation ago such a philistine attitude would have been less surprising among intelligent people ; before the scientific world

had run through the kind of change symbolized by the early Romanes and the later, and when Haeckelism had the vogue among the scientists that still remains to it in less cultivated levels. But now no less a man than Lord Morley tells us

“ what a withering mistake it is if we let indolence of mood tempt us into regarding all ecclesiastical or theological dispute as barren wrangles, all political dispute as egoistic intrigue. In forms hard and narrow, still, if we have patience to dig deep enough, they mark broad eternal elements in human nature ; sides taken in the standing quarrels of the world ; persistent types of sympathy, passion, faith and principle, that constitute the fascination, instruction, and power of command in history.”

Philosophy and History can less and less evade the spiritual question which theology is there progressively to answer. In the handling of its theology, moreover, the Church as a whole grows almost daily more modernized and fertile. It grows in this region more reasonable, mild, and exigent of competency ; it grows far more impatient of crude passion than of critical power, of popular quacks

than of able heretics. In spite of current crises, parties approximate, and Churches. And common scholarship, with its scientific revisions of the venerable issues of a historic religion, becomes one of the greatest hopes of an understanding, not to say at long last a union, between them. The confessional differences tend to retire into the doctrinaire region, and practical questions, questions of scientific history, and questions referable to experience, take precedence of theoretic disputes. On the other side, the chief need in modern civilization, with its *Realpolitik*, is an idealism which all the resources of culture do not infuse into Society at large with the public power commanded by the Church as the supreme idealist of history. The need is for an idealism of inward power and moral dignity to overrule the dominion of mere capital, mere machinery, mere civilization and, I will add, mere petty piety. And surely that is no time for discrediting competent theology in those new Universities which are trusted to give the note and set the mode for the education which makes a people great and keeps it so. Dogma in the old sense is defunct. It is a time when both our modern

individualism and our range of civilized achievement have made it impossible to include the higher culture under any one system of saving and official dogma, and when the Churches are forward to see this and preach it, were it only in the interest of theology itself. But it is also a time when the higher intelligence both needs and craves a power reasonable enough to command intelligence, to shed equal warmth and light, to view the universe as a living, purposed whole, and to give cohesion of thought to our spiritual world where so much tends to distract and dissolve. The great theologies are such efforts. They are the asymptotic expression of the divine thought in terms of the best culture of an age inheriting all the ages, when that culture is distilled and directed upon the issues central and final to them all.

Such a time is surely not the time to select for depreciating the place which competent and evolving theology holds, and should hold, in the ideal and scientific centre provided by a University. For the very sake of education and all its visions it should welcome that class of study, if only to protect itself from an examinationism discredited now even

in China, and to reduce the cry by half-culture for diplomas, certificates, tests and crams, whose effect is no less deadly in their way than the old religious tests used to be. It is odd that as these are abolished and education spread there should rise up a new crop of academic tests, also cramping to the soul that education was to release, and applied, like the old, by the machinery of the State. What is needed is not simply a set of theological examinations, nor an output of theological degrees for minds that drink down examinations like water and draw strings of letters like a cart rope. Far more important is it that the personality of a great University should not present itself to the world lopped of such an attribute of personality as its spiritual certainty and religious intelligence. It is not so hard to find or make men who are scholars with religious interests; nor is it hard to produce religious men with scientific interests. But it is not easy, it is a triumph of the highest culture, to produce the type reflected and canonized in the very constitution of a University; where the deep spontaneity and power of a spiritual life is disciplined *pari passu* with an ordering and illuminating reason. That

is the type, as historians know, represented by the great and classic theologians, from Athanasius or Augustine, through Anselm or Aquinas, from Melancthon to Maurice, from Hooker to Schleiermacher. Great as are their differences that is their type. It is among the commanding types of Humanity, among the noblest contributions of the schools to the race. And it is a type discouraged by a University which refuses to use and honour fully the only means open to it for recognizing the order of culture represented by theology at its best. The influence of such men has been incalculable in the large history of the world—to take the case of Calvin as the founder of modern democracy alone, or to add the social philosophy of Aquinas. And it is a type not producible apart from a scientific theology with power to outgrow itself, nor without the recognition of its place in the organization of culture. The Churches (I have said) have their seminaries, where the training is directed rather upon the personal aspects of the cure of souls. That must always be so, and so should be. But for the Church's own sake it needs a suffusion also by such objective and scientific treatment of the subject

as a University has special power to promote. This is a work that can never be cut up and distributed among the other Faculties—historical, linguistic, or philosophical—without indignity, nor without denying the unity of the Soul where it is most chiefly declared, in its religion and its religious construction of the world. A theological faculty in a University is not simply a religious facility nor a lever for dogma ; it is the public representative of a spiritual and ideal view of the world. It is the public recognition of some such view as a necessity of culture. And the loss or diminution of it is a premium put upon the production of the *borné* or seminarist mind in all subjects.

2. This suggests another thing to be said. Supposing theology were judged not to be a science, it remains true that it has a tremendous history as a culture, a history which gathers up and condenses the history of almost every other culture for the last two thousand years. It is the mine and ore of the best spiritual wisdom of the world, the product and deposit of the intellectual soul at closest quarters with reality and eternity. It presents, therefore, especially in its modernized treatment,

facilities of a unique kind for a trained judgment on most of the other disciplines on their upper side, whether we pursue a *scientia scientiarum*, or *litteræ humaniores*, or develop the principles of jurisprudence or history. On that ground alone it might claim its place in any institution which rose above a polytechnic, and which claimed to be a university with a culture of progressive thought or doctrine rising far above an analysis of foregone dogma.

But it may here be replied that in so far as the study of theology is but the study of its history as an extinct culture it might be relegated to the historical schools, or to the higher anthropology. If it be described as the pursuit of living and progressive doctrine that presupposes (it is said) that we are still seriously working at the subject matter, and not merely tracing the work of past ages. And, if it is claimed, as the Churches do, that doctrine starts from a datum in Christian revelation and human experience as independent as the datum of Nature is for science, it may be urged against us that the study of such theology is really what I have just described as the analysis of dogma. For (it is

said), however brief and dynamic the statement of the germinal revelation may be, it is of the nature of dogma or final truth *in nuce*, and the discipline is then only occupied with its explication. To that the most obvious reply has been hinted at. Such a datum only corresponds to the datum which a different order of science has in nature, or which culture has in history and its classics. And the fundamental principles of it are no more dogmatic in their own sphere of fact than the evolution or the uniformity of nature is in that region. But the most obvious reply rarely settles such questions; which turn really on a point of fact, or rather of reality—whether the supernatural or superhistoric is real or not, whether it gives a foundation as real in one range of experience as Nature is in another. There is room here for an immense range of discussion which has been well filled in competent circles of late years. And for the present purpose it may be well to return to our practical situation to illustrate the case.

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Within this specific region of the Universities we are not left to imagination or to generalities

to realize the situation I suggested at the outset. At the present moment the University of London is in the throes of reorganization at the hands of a Royal Commission, and legislation is being prepared on the lines of its report. In dealing with Theology there are two changes suggested. The first is minor, and I do not discuss it here. It concerns the transfer of the B.D. degree from a first degree to a second, and post graduate—a modicum of theology then becoming an option in the B.A. subjects. The second question is graver and thornier. It is raised by the position, actual and proposed, of the Faculty of Theology. It is not a difficulty which arises out of any privilege now enjoyed by the Established Church. I shall have to point out that the Faculty, composed of Established Churchmen and Free, has been working for twelve or fourteen years without any difference in policy, with no denominational axe to grind, and without the least intrusion or even reminder of the distinction from either side—purely in the interest of competent and scientific knowledge of the subject in their charge. It is as if there were no Established Church. It is the situation that would

arise were there no longer an Established Church, and in spite of the plea that the State has nothing to do with religion. Here is a case where the loss to both sides would be in the nature of a barbarism if that principle were carried out. And the Free Churches, with such founders as I have named, men trained at headquarters in their own subject, would not suffer least.

My general contention, amplified already and here compressed, is that, however inevitable the end of the present relation of State and Church may be, it is quite impossible for either practically to ignore the other. *Neutrality* is a dream. Some form or forms of mutual and practical there must be, which shall yet not be in the nature of patronage or control. The Scottish Churches are engaged at this moment on a long and delicate but promising attempt to reach a solution of the problem on such lines, under the conditions Scotland presents. And, while allowing for these, the issue there cannot but be instructive for the whole question in this realm. The University situation I have alluded to is a good illustration on this side the border of what may be meant by this principle of

practical and sympathetic recognition, and it may be worth while to give it close attention.

It ought to be observed in advance that in the University of London, the question is not directly one of abolishing the Faculty of Theology. The Report provides a place, though it can find no funds, for such a Faculty. And, for the indefinite but long period while voluntary endowments for its Chairs are outstanding, it proposes to retain the existing Faculty with shorn power and maimed rights to keep things going. But, as this means reducing the Faculty to a secondary position compared with the rest, it is not certain that its members will consent to be reckoned as *dii minorum gentium*, while even the Arts Faculty is on the Olympian peaks. And if they retired it might mean the extinction of the Faculty, as it is hardly likely that other competent men would be found prepared to accept such an indignity to such a subject as theirs.

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The question, I have said, becomes actual in connexion with the position of the Theological Faculty in the University of London.

What is the position ? For twelve years now or more, there has been a Faculty of Theology there, handling the subject and the degrees in connexion with it—and especially the B.D. degree (which gives the theological colleges a first degree in their own subject). This Faculty was established at the last reorganization of the University in 1900. Then as now, the University had no funds to set up and endow a Faculty absolutely its own. And it did instead a very wise and successful thing, which Manchester did a few years after. It took advantage of the fact that London (like Manchester) possessed a group of well equipped denominational Colleges for the education of the ministers of the various bodies whom they kept under training from three years in some cases to five or six in others. These were staffed by some of the best authorities in the subject ; some of them were well endowed ; and they carried the general ministerial education farther than it had ever been carried in England before. The University approached these institutions, formed an unpaid Faculty out of their best teachers, gave them the status of Schools of the University in some return for the immense and

gratuitous addition it made to the work of their staffs, and put the curriculum of the degree into their hands—subject of course to the control of the Senate. There are at present six of these schools (making a Faculty of more than a score), two Anglican, two Congregationalist, one Baptist, and one Wesleyan Methodist. The whole record of these twelve years' work has been one of unbroken harmony and peace, in an atmosphere of mutual respect for each other which passes into something more, and of loyalty to the University which puts learning before all else. The standard of work in the schools has been in some cases doubled, in all raised. The examinations of course do not turn on questions which involve the merits of the theological case (that the colleges supply to their own students and test in their own way), but chiefly on the history of Church and doctrine, or on the languages, literatures, or philosophies involved. And any answer would be judged by its competency and not by its complexion. The competency of the teachers is open for the public judgment in many forms, and especially in the volume of studies by them recently published by

the University. The University (my point is) recognizes sympathetically and practically the competent work of the Churches in the subject, without patronage or control (in any but the ordinary academic sense of the word control).¹

But for the new Commission a serious difficulty arose just here. They desired naturally a symmetry of Faculties. All the professors should be paid by the University, and appointed only on grounds which have academic worth. But on this symmetry the peculiar conditions of theology and its schools intruded, and made an academic Ulster. In the first place the object of the training in these schools was practical—it was less for research than to produce preachers and pastors for the Church under real scholars. Therein, however, we have one of the most instructive and valuable features of the new Universities—their close and wholesome connexion with public life or practical work, as we see also in their medical schools. And this while

¹ The statements about the schools in the Report are extremely inaccurate, and must not be taken as they stand, and here I do not speak simply for myself. The faculty is agreed.

duly providing for research and the breaking of new ground. But, in the next place, as it was the practical work of *Churches*, that had to be regarded, and of Trust Institutions within them, that meant a relation of the theological schools to past revelation, belief, knowledge, and teaching, which did not obtain in the other disciplines. This difficulty the Commission were faced with at once. In the words of the Report—

“The theological Faculty differs from all the other Faculties in an important respect. Although the University is free from all tests, and recognizes no differences of religious belief either in its students, its candidates for degrees or its teachers; and although the syllabuses of the approved courses in theology and of examinations are such as any Christian students can follow, yet all the ‘recognized teachers’ in this Faculty are appointed to their posts by the governing bodies of theological colleges, who do in fact impose the test of conformity to their particular tenets on all candidates for lectureships, and upon all students

coming to their colleges [?]. The theological colleges are professional institutions, maintained by religious bodies, under trusts which would not permit of the education they give being controlled by an undenominational University."

The first observation on this is that we have here an elevated form of the plea, so often heard on the lower reaches of the education controversy, that undenominationalism should supersede the denominationalism of the Churches so far as the State is concerned. This seems to amount to the establishment of a new -ism ; of which more anon.

And the next observation is that the University controls both the syllabus and the examinations, and the Senate has power to alter any decision of the composite Faculty on the subject.

But it may be worth while to go to closer quarters with the position.

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No doubt an institution devoted wholly to research must abjure the idea of a *parti pris*. It must resent being tied to any con-

clusions in advance. It must be free to follow where discovery leads. I hope, however, to show later what I have hinted already, that the suggestions of the Report do not avoid *parti pris*, that in avoiding the committals of the Churches they accept committals none the less. No doubt in subjects ancillary to theology, like comparative religion, palæography, or specialized and advanced study of any kind, the University might well supplement the work of the Colleges by providing teachers or professors whose chief interest would be in research, without reference to the theology of the Churches. But I would suggest as a first question whether research is the sole function of a University? Besides the theoretical sciences are there not the practical, with their great part in the due education of the professional man for his work in the nation? It is these that are represented by the leading Faculties hitherto in the Universities, such as Law, Medicine and Philology. But why are they retained in a State University, instead of being left, as intellectual hobbies, to nurture by voluntary societies formed for the purpose? It is not because of their purely scientific value,

not because they aim only at the extension of knowledge; it is because great social interests are bound up with them, interests connected with the public health, the course of justice, and the value for educating the young of a classical education. No one would think of abolishing or degrading such Faculties because they are not purely heuristic in their energies or their object. They have an immense value for the practical life of the community when it is conceived on the large scale. So also it is with Theology. Not only has it a close concern with scientific conclusions, not only does it offer in its past a history, a literature, and a field for research at least equal to that of the classical nations, but it is the mental expression of a Society which for civilization has been at least as powerful as natural society, and more so than Antiquity; and it has very much to do with the practical affairs both of the Christian Society and of Society at large. Society at large has the closest and most vital interest in the Society and mind of the Churches—many think there is no interest so vital to mankind as the Society of the Church. If it is a question of culture with vital national

value, then theology (which is the intelligence of the Church) is not behind the other Faculties which the State establishes in a University. The fact that theology from the Church's practical side has its disputes with other academic interests from the purely scientific side is beside the point. The orbits of the Faculties often cross each other in a wholesome way. So also the Faculties are modified by the public. In Economics, it may be remembered, the purely scientific treatment of the subject has been profoundly affected by the influence, not to say pressure, applied to it not simply from another Faculty, but from sociological study, and from its invasion by certain irresistible moral considerations rising from the nature, occasions, and crises of actual Society, just as modifying theological considerations rise and press from the actual living society of the Church and alter its beliefs.

Divinity belongs to the practical sciences which cannot be pursued in a social vacuum, and which have a vast effect on the long large course of public life. And it has therefore features of its own which are other than those of pure research, and which ought not

to be determined by that interest alone, or even perhaps in chief. Divinity belongs to the practical sciences, which do not resent, as research does, the prescription of a particular end or even system. In the case of Divinity, that end is given in its historic beginning, in the nature of the revelation which provides the facts and secures the end, and which is the charge, if not monopoly, of the Church it called into being for the purpose. But even research starts with the fruitful limitations and prescriptions of a method. Research of an amateur kind would not be sanctioned; it must follow what is recognized as scientific method. In the case of the medical schools also, there is an orthodoxy which the University recognizes. It would not appoint a homœopath, however able, to its chair of Medicine, nor would it be likely to find any post for Mr. Barker on its staff in osteotherapy. So much of a premium it does accept from the schools, and allow to restrict absolute freedom in dealing with a practical science. Need it therefore boggle as it does at the imposition on theology by its schools of the conditions of its religious origin, conditions prescribed by the historic

nature of its object and committed to the custody of the Church, as healing is to the medical schools. And all the less need it fear, since in a positive and enlightened Christianity, there is offered "a key for all the mythologies" and an interpretation for all religions which sends its modern theologians inevitably to other religions with both a light and a love.

But if the Commission do fear that less than justice to religious research may be done by beliefs and committals foreign to the nature of a University, they cannot accept the positive limitations imposed on theology by Christianity itself. A University as such can have no particular form of theology, Christian or non-Christian.

But this question arises. In such a subject which is the proper course of study, the more fruitful, the more just to the powers and principles involved? Is it to come to Christianity from the other religions (or from religion in general), or is it to come to these religions from Christianity? Which better provides us with the sympathetic exploring, interpreting and evaluating power? Which equips us better with a starting point in the depth and

inwardness of religion ? I shall not be allowed to say it is the latter course without creating some difference of opinion. But I believe I have with me the trend of opinion where such studies are pursued most keenly—in Germany. But then a University as such cannot put a premium on the profession of Christianity. It can only look round for the chief expert in the whole subject of theology. And in so looking it finds the Church on its academic side, ready to hand ; whom it recognizes and appoints accordingly on the ground of competency and not of confession. This seems the exit from the dilemma ; and it is the existing arrangement. The Church is the expert of Theology. Only the Churches can cultivate theology proper, the religious calculus of the religions, with the fulness and universality that a University should require. What is the greater and truer theology which the Churches damage ? And how does the Commission make up its mind that it is superior to that which the Church promotes ? What and where is the scientific theology which is in the care of the Commission and is injured by the reasonable theology of the Churches ? Taking their theology at its best, as the present

Faculty represents it, what is there in it to hurt that scientific study of religion which some of them have done much to promote whether in Christianity or in other faiths ? I am not putting these questions polemically, but only rhetorically in order to indicate that the step proposed implies a decision more or less technical and still *sub judice* on a matter of profound principle as to what constitutes a scientific theology. And it seems to call for a reasoned statement of the grounds of conviction leading the Commission to suggest it.

The modern treatment of theology by the Churches, with all their positivity, is very wide, sympathetic, and scientific toward all the facts of religion, historical or psychological. It is an inclusive and interpretive positivity. It makes other creeds mean more than they realize. And it is competent and methodic (if we disregard those spokesmen of the Church who do not take theology seriously). If it be asked what is the voice of the Churches on such a matter the answer is a theological one (in which direction, indeed, Church unity lies) ; and it is so practical that it has been at work with entire peace and success during the whole lifetime of the present composite Faculty.

Why not recognize that success ? It marches. It works. It promises. It is the only present possibility. Why degrade it ? When the Report discredits it does it not mean that the Commission has made up its mind as to what a true ideal of theology is, and come to the conclusion that the Churches do not have it and cannot ? For if the schools are bound so are the Churches. This is a very great issue indeed, and one where the pleadings of those who know are far from done. And the Report starts from an unargued *parti pris.* Some frankness seems due to the Christian bodies, who must contribute from their postulant ministry most of the candidates for a degree, to say nothing of University teachers. It should be considered whether the Churches, which would furnish the main supply of students to the University professors, would send their neophytes for their theological culture to lectures which might assume superiority or indifference to the positive Christianity on which all Churches rest ?

As a matter of fact the study of theology (in so far as it transcends a philosophy of natural religion or a spiritual anthropology) means either the science of the Bible, or the

science of revelation, or the science of the Church's mind—the study of Christian origins, of the Christian message, and of the Christian society made by that message and explicating it by work and thought in relation to natural society. Is it suggested that true justice could only be done to the mind in the Christian message by those outside the Christian Society which it created, which always crystallizes upon it, and whose corporate and progressive intelligence Christian theology presents? Is it held that the best justice could be done to other religions, or to religion as a psychological phenomenon, by teachers who need not have any personal experience of religion, far less of its supreme historic form, who might be unsympathetic to it or even hostile, who might ignore the psychology of the great Saints as insanity if it were measured by a psychology of the average believer, or even of the natural man, based upon questionnaires he is little able to answer, and much at sea when he tries?

But in evading the difficulty they name the Commission are faced with another of a practical kind which they also recognize. To do the symmetrical thing on the huge postulates I have tried to explain, they see that they

should establish and endow unpledged Chairs in the various theological branches without regard to the Churches or their constituent beliefs. To the founding of such chairs Parliament would grant nothing. For it would be an endowment of undenominationalism on the higher plane ; and that would be but endowing another theological -ism, more pallid than the rest but not more pure.

It is singular that, while the Churches are rapidly becoming convinced of the fallacy and impotence of undenominationalism, the University Commission would like to enthrone it. What the Churches are moving to is inter-denominationalism, based on a scholarly revision of what is truly meant by the Catholic element in Christianity. And that is the very thing that is practically recognized, and is working so well, in the present Faculty. Recourse would have to be had for the founding of undenominational theological Chairs to private munificence. But that source is about equally hopeless with parliament. For money, which is so generously therapeutic, is neither educational nor theological. And it is not only not theological, its education and its heroes lead it to think theology waste, and the

theologian about as useful to the community as an orchid hunter, or the pursuer of any other exotic, including the poles. And money is orthodox. It is mostly *der Freund des Bestehenden*. In so far as it has religious views it is apt to be conventional. And it would be little likely to place its bequests for such a purpose at the free disposal of a colourless University.

There is really no chance in any measurable time of a Faculty of the purely academic order being set up. And if it were, it would have comparatively little interest for the Churches, where the article is chiefly in demand—except perhaps for such special subjects of research as I have above named. It would have little of their confidence in matters of theology proper. For it might represent a high form of what might be called religious idealism, sympathetic enough with Christianity æsthetically, i.e. in its place among other religions as phenomenal, and highly skilled to handle it so. But it would be handling only as ideas what for the Churches are—ideas indeed, but still more incarnate ideas—facts, and powers, and presences, and what must be so as long as Churches remain Churches. On the other

hand, in so far as that was not so, the Chairs would be staffed by recourse to the eminent authorities who are to be found mainly in the service of the committed, and therefore dangerous Churches. But it is not clear then how scientific theology is to have the protection the Commission desires. These obscurantist Churches and their Schools would still command the situation. And how much this vain protection would cost the University ! At present it is presented by the Churches with a competent Faculty of Theology (whose syllabus and examinations it controls), free of cost beyond office expenses. While even if it paid its own professors it would still be to these Churches, with their "committed" scholars, that it would have to go for the most part. The only logical course would be explicitly to exclude from its Chairs ministers of all denominations, i.e. to inhibit a certain class of scientific results. This was done by Mr. Grote in founding the Chair of Moral Science at University College (now a part of the University). It was a course which cost the College one of the most profound and brilliant minds of the day, in Dr. James Martineau. It opened some eyes, to my own knowledge,

to the really sectarian nature of the school that then claimed a monopoly, or at least a hegemony, of enlightenment. And they were eyes that that school had trained to see.

To meet these difficulties the Report would mark time. Its policy of principle is at present impossible. So it proposes to bridge the interval by keeping the present Faculty of Theology alive, but on low diet, if not in a state of suspended animation. It would be reduced to a second-rate Faculty, its first degree merged as a branch or option of the B.A. degree (with the reduction of standard from the present B.D.), and the schools lowered to a level which would not recompense those concerned for their service to the University. Whereof the result might be a return to the state of things prior to the constitution of the Faculty twelve years ago, and the practical retirement of theology from the University—except perhaps as another subject for the coaches.

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In all this it is the perennial question of Church and State that recurs in a subdued and academic form. It is our old friend the religious question in education, but presenting

himself with quite new introductions, and in circumstances very different from those that make the worst complications in another field. Indeed, the large context of the problem is the whole higher history of civilization, and even the place of religion in the culture of the general soul. And the only exit is to accept the facts involved. That means the principle of Recognition, instead of the principle of Establishment, of the Church by the civil power. It is to recognize the unique position of theology, residing in its very nature as the joint product of a revelation and a Church which treats its revelation duly and therefore progressively ; to recognize in the Church its prerogative and freedom in theology as in other affairs that are vital to its life ; to sacrifice in this case the monarchical idea of a symmetry of faculties for the freer idea of a federation, or establishment by recognition ; and to utilize the work done by the Churches in a subject where they always must be the really competent parties for its handling. Churches must be dealt with differently from hospitals, from the nature of their material and its historic fountain. The State would thus neither endow nor patronize the religious element (indeed,

it would be endowed by it); but it would recognize theological autonomy, and use it on principles truly and only educational, leaving the Colleges (as now) to supply requirements special to the professional life of the students or their Church's faith. The establishment of education is believed in by many who object to it in a Church; and the safest way of establishing theological education is to recognize and utilize its culture in its native land of the Churches so far as that can be academically tested. (If it is really so that theology is best pursued on neutral ground, if that is the true view there could be no better means of raising the Churches to see it.) Such recognition is the principle of the existing Faculty (whose Board of Studies is strengthened also by a number of other select and co-opted persons.) Unless this is done a University ignores the religion where the most adequate knowledge of the subject must always be found. For the Church is, and always must be, monopolist of the best theology. It is, as I say, the theological expert. And it is the part of a cultured State to recognize the expert, and to greet the service to thought, knowledge, and ideals which the Church offers.

If the State University do not do this, it detaches itself from the practical life of the nation in the region which affects practice more than any other. It loses the opportunity of a share and a standard in teaching the ministry—a class of teachers calculated in proper conditions to be the most influential of all on the nation. The true course would therefore be to retain for theology (with its special nature), the arrangement that has worked with success for more than a decade, both in London and Manchester, and has only now got into its stride. It enriches the University with the best results of the endowments and other resources peculiar to the Churches, whether in men or money. It benefits the Churches with a University standard and seal upon the education of the ministry. And it embodies the principle of recognition, which will play so great a part in coming phases of the Establishment question.

EPILOGUE

THERE is no conviction more strongly borne in on the writer of these pages than this, to which the Free Churches are not wide awake —that the whole question of the State is a Church question at last; that the question of the relation of Church and State is a religious question, and that its final treatment must be in the hands of religious men, and of religious men acting as such, acting on their religious principles. By which, I mean that it is not in the first instance a political question, and that it is not to be settled either by politicians or by religious men whose politics are not directly prescribed by their religious hours, insights, and teachers.

It is not a question in which the natural democracy has the last word. The last word is not with the democratic state but with the Church, in whose view the democracy belongs to the monarchy, revelation, and obedience of Christ. If a majority of mere citizens cast

their vote repeatedly for the disestablishment of the Church, and if at the same time the Churches grew more solid in the conviction that some form of establishment was the will of Christ, i.e. the principle of the Gospel, then nothing that legislation might do could be permanent, for it would be fighting against God. And it would bring us nearer civil war than anything else. The supposition, of course, is extreme, perhaps impossible, but it illustrates my meaning as to the principle.

I am not speaking of the terms of disendowment, with which I have nothing here to do. But I speak of the principle of such real and practical relation between Church and State as would go far to settle the issue of property or subsidy. As to which I repeat that the relation is prescribed neither by the consciousness nor the convenience of the State, but by the genius and content of the Church as the trustee of the supreme revelation for society, and its redemption ethical and spiritual. If the Gospel of Christ carried in it the principle of establishment, then the action of the State against that principle might be as drastic as was the French Revolution, but it could be no more just nor more permanent.

The disestablishment of the Church must be effected principally by the Church, whose Gospel is the organizing principle at last of the ideal society and the new Humanity. It should come to pass with the consent, and even desire, of the best representatives of all sections of the Christian Church in our midst, even of the Church it was proposed to disestablish. To secure anything like that perception and consent, it would be worth while to wait for a very long time. Here especially we should beware of the impatience which so easily besets the democracy, and which is particularly dangerous to its spiritual life.

Here, too, perhaps, a friendly word to the Liberation Society might be allowed from a subscriber. That is a society, which exists, by its own programme, not for the severance of the bond between Church and State, but for the release of religion from the State's patronage and control. I am not sure that this is kept in view by all its members, or all its procedure. Some of its older representatives carry on the individualist tradition which the Church has now outgrown no less than the State; and their note sounds archaic and belated in the conditions to which society and its ethic have

come. They do not grasp the large and corporate conceptions, either of State or of Church, which mark both history and ethic at the present time. And some of its procedure, the tone, for instance, of some of its agents in rural districts and popular gatherings, betrays a prominence of the merely partisan, polemical, and carping element which robs the whole issue of its religious atmosphere, and reduces it to the level of electioneering talk by platform hacks. The issue is now far too great for the old individualisms, and too fine for party bickering. And I venture respectfully to suggest to the Society that, if it is to do for the new future a work as good as it has done in the old past, it should court a better acquaintance with the profounder views of the subject now accessible. It should adjust itself to a new service of the great Church as the justification for the existence of every constituent Church; and to that sense of the Church as a Church (in distinction from a mere religious group), which the Free Churches are rapidly losing, and which is the Christian counterpart of the new social consciousness. It should orient itself to the situation created by the High

Church movement and the Liberationism there. It should recognize that the issue above all is a Church issue. And it should face the serious fact I name, that in the Free Churches the sense of the Church is becoming extinct, and therewith the solution of this question is passing from them.

The old England has gone, through a German war against Humanity which the Byzantinism of the German Church left possible. For good or ill, we are at the end of an age, not to say a world. We face conditions more new and spiritual (when the temporary brutalization of war shall have passed) than many of the Churches have been used to or trained to. It will be a new world for Church no less than for State, with not only a new seriousness in the public mind, but a new construction of things and principles. We shall be driven upon issues which are not soluble by our traditions, but only by our principles, and a fresh insight into them—the principles not of public equity but of our revelation and faith as these open up to the choicer spirits who are endowed for each age with the *flair* for the Kingdom of God. Let us wait respectfully not on the pleasing preachers, but on the men who, in

Scripture language, have the anointing from the Holy One to understand ; i.e., who have moral and historical insight to read the time, and to elicit from the old the powerful, the continuous, and new. Let us turn from the colourists great or small to the men of drawing and of ideas, from the impressionists to the Saviour and Apostles. “ You can buy colours on the Rialto,” said Tintoretto, “ but drawing can only come by labour.” There is nothing that the rank and file of the Churches and of their officers need more than the exaltation and deepening of their issues, the dignifying of the cries and tactics of the past in the light of our new knowledge of all history, and of Church history especially, in the light also of our new grasp of the social nature of the Gospel. The social problem of the Church is much more than mending society ; it is to create a supernatural society.

The Liberation Society has yet a great work to do ; but that work should be more than to agitate ; it should be to educate, if not its own members, yet the public of the Churches it represents. I understand, at the date of writing, that a step in this direction is being taken, and that a prize is to be offered

of £100 for the best book on the subject in its present state. The book that may be crowned will reveal to us how far the Society is alive to the real spiritual situation of the hour, and its true, large, ecclesiastical inwardness. There is nothing so necessary in this matter as that each side should know and weigh the best that the other has to say for itself. And the necessity is equally great on both sides. Half and more of the disgraceful bitterness of the inevitable conflict will vanish if it is guided on both sides, not by political Hotspurs, but by Christian scholars and seers; and, if it is inspired by a religion which is owned to be equally earnest and devoted on both sides to the absolute Lordship of Christ, and the supremacy of His Kingdom, however diverse as yet their views of that may be. The point at issue is, what was and is His will? Both sides alike seek, and equally seek, the glory of God and the honour of Christ and His message to men. What is needed is, that the contest should be so conducted as to leave no doubt on that head in the public mind, to leave indeed a profound and ennobling impression there that it is so, that *brothers* are engaging; and that the

Churches should argue their case, without invective or insinuation, on another than the earthly plane, and with another than an earthly lead. In a word let us treat the conflict as an aspect of Redemption and a work of the Holy Ghost.

APPENDIX I

Note referred to in Chapter VII

Since writing this chapter I have found the following passage in *The Law of Associations*, by Herbert A. Smith, M.A., of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1914, pp. 46–7.

“THE true solution would seem to be, that in the case of a religious community having a doctrinal basis the State courts should altogether refrain from endeavouring to define these doctrines. The courts must, of course, determine all questions of property, and it may often be the case that only those persons who maintain certain doctrines are entitled to the enjoyment of certain property. But in ascertaining what the doctrines are the secular judge should be content to accept the ruling of whatever is the authoritative organ of the community in question. In other words, the civil court should treat the decision

of the ecclesiastical tribunal upon such a matter with the same respect as it treats the judgment of a foreign court upon a question properly within the foreign jurisdiction. This would still leave it open to the secular judge to inquire whether the proper and normal procedure had been followed, and to see, in short, whether there was any irregularity apparent on the face of the proceedings. But if everything is *prima facie* in order, the civil court should accept the ecclesiastical ruling upon a doctrinal point as the judgment of a foreign or domestic tribunal acting properly within its jurisdiction. Otherwise we are inevitably landed in great difficulties ; and these difficulties are not merely technical. The lamentable history of the Privy Council decisions in the so-called ‘Ritual Cases’ has taught us by now that the rulings of secular judges upon matters of doctrine and worship carry no moral authority whatever, and are in practice almost impossible to enforce.

“Lord Lyndhurst’s Act (1844) provided that, where any dispute should arise as to the doctrinal terms of any Nonconformist trust the matter should (in the absence of any written instrument) be decided by the usage

of the last twenty-five years; and a clause to the same effect was inserted in the Roman Catholic Charities Act of 1860, directing that, in the administration of such charities, the evidence of twenty years' usage should (in the absence of any written instrument) prevail.

“It cannot be said that the law on this subject is at present in a satisfactory state, and, until a rule resting upon some clear principle is laid down by Parliament, the law must be regarded as uncertain in its doctrine and likely to prove harsh in its practical application.”

APPENDIX II—CHAPTER VI

[Except a few sentences, this was written
in September, 1914.]

SINCE the writing of this book, the result of State absolutism has been shown in a more than striking—an appalling—light by the case of Germany. It has issued there in the reign of a militarism which deliberately disowns moral obligations in national interests. And this situation has neither been challenged nor repudiated with horror by the German Church, which would seem to have lost the prophetic note in the academic, and become the creature of the State in a way that isolates it in the world of Protestantism at least. It is not the Rationalism of Germany that has been so deadly to its soul, but its more than Erastianism. It is its Byzantinism that has thus severed it from the Christian conscience of the world. It has left the nation capable of action towards Belgium which has

horrified the rest of Christendom by its moral cynicism, and shocked it by its theological apologies. When a war was declared which included in the plan of campaign the ravaging of neutral little Belgium, the Emperor's cry to the people was "To your Churches." Have any of these Churches repelled the offence ? Was there no Ambrose to face this Theodosius ? Surely a nation has become morally impious whose Chancellor bluntly and unchallenged declared that such conduct was wrong¹ but necessary, and must be carried out by prompt terrorism ; and whose apologists frankly say that, while the individual has a morality because the State is over him, the State has none, because over it there is nothing. Of such culture Machiavelli is the prophet. It is a greater bane than defeat when it has captured the Christian mind, for it abolishes the Christian conscience. It is not practical Atheism so much as the fruit of practical Atheism, and the judgment upon it. It is practical Anti-Theism. It is national Anti-christ. It is the complete repudiation by a people and its religion of the Kingdom of God, the dethronement of a God of public righteous-

¹ Many leading Churchmen also have denied the wrongness.

ness among the peoples and the consummation of materialism in brute force. To the treatment of Belgium or of Rheims must also be added the policy of the German Admiralty, which means nothing less than the murder of non-combatants by the use for destroying commerce on the high seas of torpedo craft which blow up passenger liners without mercy or rescue. Miscalculation has lost Islam to Germany; this wickedness has cost it America. Amos and other prophets denounced to Israel ruin for their Semitic cruelty to the surrounding nations; and it came. Is any voice being raised from the German Church in Christian protest against such inhumanity? Do none there dread the searing effect on generations of the passion of hate which the teaching of that Church has left possible—not because it is inhuman but because it has not dared for generations to tell its State and Army Christian truth except what was theological or academic. It is a dreadful Nemesis on the State's education of the Church's ministry. To say truth, there have not been quite lacking voices which foretold the danger to the Church of parting with the education of its clergy to the Universities of the State, with their supreme

concern for science, and their indifference or hostility to a Gospel.

And these crimes have been done by a people whose service to Christianity has been unspeakable in its day both of Reformation and Illumination. Time would fail me to tell of the world's obligations to the old Germany as the *preceptor mundi* and the anti-Napoleonic idealist. But that Fichte should come to this ! We now see that a nation can totally change its character, and can be saved by no idealism from succumbing to a public egotism of the deadliest kind, which takes the bloom from patriotism and makes duty to the nation to be for the individual the service of evil.

Germany once taught the world that the just shall live by his faith ; but she has learned to ignore the first half of that verse (Hab. ii. 4). "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright within him" ; or verse 10, "Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many peoples, and hast sinned against thine own soul."

My point here is that it is the German Church that has left it possible for the German State to become the victim of such a Na-

tionalism, to be enslaved to an army and its atmosphere of moral cynicism, and to be turned to the moral enemy of God and man. It is all full of warning. It is the political reflection of the German Church's relation to its State. That relation has killed the prophet in the Church, stifled its protest for Christian righteousness before kings, and reduced it from an Apostle of Christ to an eloquent army chaplain or a most accomplished court *abbé*.

Dr. Harnack's reply to the English theologians (whose hereditary public liberty has bred an *Erbweisheit* that does know something of political affairs) showed that he had suddenly been thrust into a region of righteousness too remote from him for even his brilliance to light up, and unfamiliar to even his erudition. It is a region that calls for the ethical tact of an international conscience such as the rich and original lore of the German mind does not rear. It is one thing to be instructed scribes of the Kingdom of God and another to be its moral experts and apostles. We have gratefully learned from Harnack and his academic confrères more than they have learned from us and our practical Christianity,

from which they might have learned without loss of due pride.

Omniscient and efficient Germany does not understand spiritual autonomy and the conscience of a Free Church, which is unknown to it at home, and seems to it an oddity abroad. Yet the spiritual autonomy of Rome defeated Bismarck in the Kulturkampf of 1870. The German Church has no moral martyrdoms, as a Church, in public life. Where England had Puritanism Germany had but Pietism; and this is the moral result. This is one large and historic explanation of its public ethic to-day, which has roused Britain and lost America. Its witness for free thought (which is not a prime Christian issue) is sterile by its lack of witness for a free conscience (which for Christianity is not only prime but essential). It has no practical protest against the popery of Caesar.

Our own past history, full as it is of so much that we can now but confess, repent, amend, and undo—if it yet teach us anything world-worthy in this respect—teaches us this, that a nation's freedom and dignity, political or moral, can only be permanently won in no mere war of national liberation, but in

a conflict which secures the freedom of its Church ; including a freedom and a power to beard, and, if need be, defy, its State in the name of the conscience, righteousness, and humanity of the World-Kingdom of God. It was in an ecclesiastical conflict on a moral issue, a conflict rising to the acute height of decapitating the State, that the freedom of Britain was won—a freedom of which it is trustee for the world. “I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.” If the Church lose that prophetic office to the State, it ceases, amid whatever pietism or learning, to be a Church of the living God, or an agent of His Kingdom ; which Kingdom and its righteousness is the most irresistible thing in the world—the most precious as it comes by the way of grace and truth to the peoples, and the most costly if it must come by the way of judgment.

I do not think it doubtful that, but for the outrage on Belgium, the English attitude to Germany would have been very different. That offence turned a question of policy into a moral question such as the English public promptly understands. Public opinion was crystallized and solidified in a moment. Policy

was invested with a moral right, and became a direct issue of the Kingdom of God. Had the war been waged but on France and Russia, this country would have been much bewildered and seriously divided. There would have been a very powerful party against our participation, and for our entire isolation. Our grave divisions, instead of being fused, would have been increased by another of the first magnitude. And I venture to think that in that protesting party might have been found the working classes, the Free Churches in the main, and generally what used to be unhappily called the Nonconformist Conscience. Had the Government gone to war in such circumstances, the protest from these would have been loud, and constant, and not negligible. It would have broken bonds of party allegiance, not to say national loyalty. The murder of Belgium was a moral crime, which may prove also to have been a military blunder. And it will never be forgotten by Christendom that the German Church had no prophet's voice of protest, condemnation, or even criticism to raise. And this not for lack of individual piety, or learning, or integrity on the part of either the members or the leaders of

that Church, but because, as a Church that should serve the Kingdom of God, it is cowed and paralysed by a relation to the State which is the fatal legacy of Luther's treatment of the Princes and the exterminating dragonnade by his Protestantism on spiritual freedom in the Anabaptists. He made political resignation a high virtue, which is a fatal public ethic. Germany, as I have said, has had no Puritanism in her history. For France it was killed in the Bartholomew, and Germany never had it. She never had spiritual and moral liberty in her Church. She had not a Calvin. And she has sunk, in consequence, to such means and morals as we see, to capture his capture of the West. She is still feudal, with a feudalism belated and therefore demoralized. Her war is the last stand of a feudalism which has the same ignoble relation to the mediæval as the Islam of Turkey to-day has to the great Islam of the Moors or Saladin.

I will venture to add a few words from Ehrhard's *Der Katholicismus*, the work of a just-minded Catholic with much historical insight and modern sympathy. Speaking of the way in which German nationalism cap-

tured Christianity in the external course of the Reformation, he says :

“ If it is stated that Protestantism is the form of Christianity specifically German, that is perfectly true. But it is the greatest condemnation it could have. For it owns to the subordination of religion to nature ; and that in the long run is the very essence of Paganism.”

It means, he says, the absolute supremacy of State Churchism, which Harnack himself views with apprehension (*Wesen*, p. 179). “ A national Church,” Ehrhard goes on, “ will always become a State Church unless it deliquesce into Conventicism. State Churchism is not a power that unites, but severs.”

And we now see how the completest Byzantinism leads to the isolation of the German nation in the world not only of nations but of morals and of humanity, as well as of religion. The barrack has come to have more effect on its character than its Church has.

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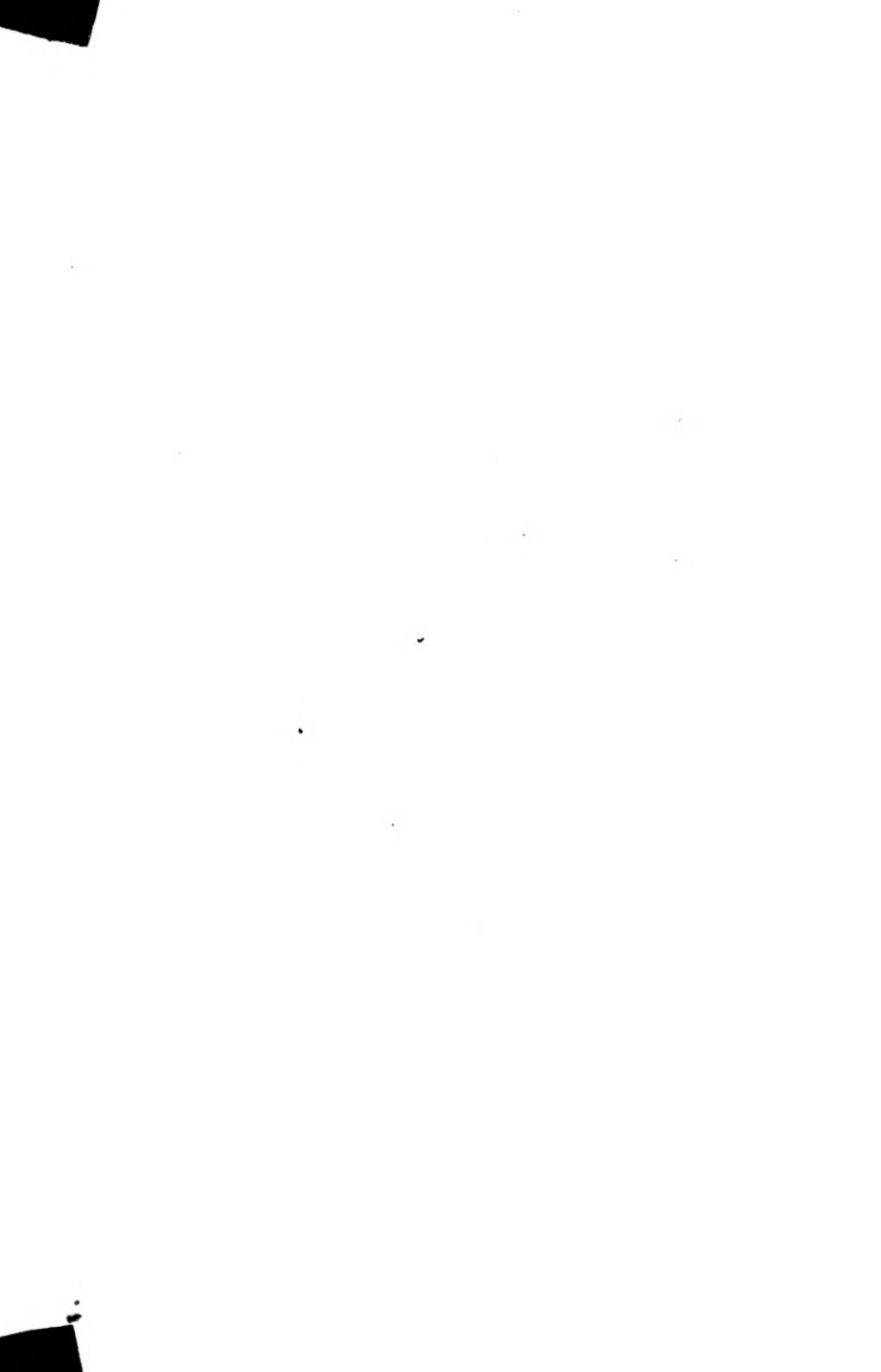
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